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Friday Review



Why they want to ban Michael Collins

Neil Jordan on his new film



The ten greatest pop videos of all time

Music page 10

Parents win right to shun life-saving transplant for son

Clare Dyer
Legal Correspondent

The parents of an 18-month-old boy who will die without a liver transplant won the backing of three appeal court judges yesterday for their decision not to subject him to the operation.

The judges described their decision as "desperately difficult" but upheld the right of the parents, health care professionals with experience of seri-

ously ill children, to decide what was best for their son. The boy was born in April 1995 with a life-threatening liver defect. His mother, aged 27, joined his father, 32, who had taken a job abroad, coincidentally just before a liver became available for transplant. After she refused to bring the child back for the operation, the local social services department won a High Court ruling ordering her to bring him home.

Jacinta Peake, the mother's solicitor, said she was "enormously relieved" that her appeal against the order had been upheld. "She has been under enormous stress. She has asked for time to consider her position in its entirety."

An injunction bans identification of the parents, their son, the country they live in, the hospital and doctors involved, and the council which took the case to court.

A spokesman for the Official Solicitor, who represented the child, said "careful consideration" would be given to the possibility of asking the House of Lords to hear the case after the three judges refused leave to appeal.

Without the transplant, the child has been given a maximum 18 months to live. But his parents believe he would suffer months of pain after an operation from which he might not survive, or which would not necessarily prolong his life. Children given liver transplants undergo a long, complicated operation fol-

lowed by episodes of rejection and infections, during which they take immunosuppressive drugs. But of 200 children who had liver transplants at the Children's Hospital, Birmingham, 80 per cent were alive five years later.



"In the village of Sarches only four out of 120 homes are unscathed. Half a dozen lorries piled high with the remains of people's livelihood lurched along the dirt road in the opposite direction as we drove in. Women and children perched on top, men hung from the sides." Jonathan Steele, page 6

Blair push for knives U-turn

Ewen MacAskill, Chief Political Correspondent

TONY BLAIR intensified the battle for populist support yesterday when he tried to force the Government into another U-turn — this time over the banning of combat knives — after meeting the widow and family of the murdered headmaster Philip Lawrence.



Blades for sale
 ANK Warrior "skull-crusher" with curved serrated blade; £197.
 Combat Smatchet, with double-edged blade 12in by 3in; £285.
 Special Forces Giant Bowie, curved 12in blade and serrated back; £39.99.
 Vantage Bowie 6.5in blade, heavy brass fittings, "designed to go with the arm to maximise the cutting effect"; £27.50.
 Commando knife, 6.5in double-edged serrated blade; £19.99.
 Jack Pyke: machete-type 2ft blade; £97.

Mr Blair, in a repeat of the tactics he used on Wednesday to force the Government to change tack on stalking and paedophiles' register, offered to co-operate with John Major on a bill to outlaw knives available over the counter in martial arts shops or from mail order catalogues.

Downing Street, careful not to be re-footed again, said it would consider Mr Blair's offer. The Home Office was lukewarm, saying it was difficult to find a workable definition of a combat knife that would distinguish it from a kitchen knife.

A spokesman for the shadow home secretary, Jack Straw, boasted Labour could come up with a definition: "Everyone knows the kind of knives we mean." He suggested as a first step restrictions on advertising of knives that "incite or condone violence".

The Liberal Democrats, after talks with Labour, offered to participate in cross-party talks at the Home Office. Mr Blair met Frances Lawrence and two of her four children in his office yesterday morning. Earlier this week Mrs Lawrence, whose husband was stabbed to death, included a ban on knives in her agenda for a moral regeneration of Britain. She described shops selling combat knives as "symbols of evil".

Top taxman 'took bribes on breathtaking scale'

'Ghostbuster' was bought off with holidays and a prostitute, court told

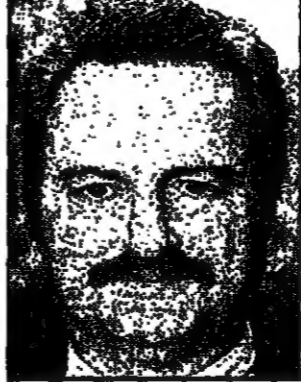
Don Atkinson

THE Inland Revenue's top "ghostbuster" was corrupted by the tax-avoiding phantoms he was supposed to be nailing, according to a court told yesterday. Michael Alcock repaid these favours by making generous tax settlements with his paymasters and shielding

privately, threw extravagant parties and always had money to spend." He explained this by saying his wife had inherited and his father gave him money, the court heard.

Mr Alcock had been "bought off", Mr Black added, as a result of which the Inland Revenue had lost hundreds of thousands of pounds in tax. Mr Black was speaking on the first day of the trial.

Mr Alcock had, until his suspension in September 1992, been one of the most respected of Inland Revenue special officers, famed for his ability to extract back-tax from the wealthy. He worked for an office that specialised



Michael Alcock... repaid for generous assessments?

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Sketch

Rifkind's lesson goes up the pole



Simon Hoggart

A HUNDRED years ago, when a British foreign secretary thundered, the world shook. Even 80 years ago, as Leo Abse records in his new book — otherwise a vicious personal tirade against Tony Blair — Herbert Morrison could make a majestically boring speech, and expect to hear it repeated in full on the BBC. Now it's more like a civics class. No wonder only 14 Labour backbenchers were in place to hear Malcolm Rifkind's swift tour d'horizon — if it's 3.17pm, it must be the Falklands. This is the view not from King Charles Street but from the plenary session of a Conference on World Co-operation and Intercultural Development, held somewhere agreeably mountainous with individual in-room saunas. "The bi-polar world is now behind us," said Mr Rifkind. "What we have now is a multi-polar world." How can you have a multi-polar world? I suppose he meant the north and south poles, the hitherto undiscovered east and west poles, the greasy pole, and the bargepole which defines the distance Mr Rifkind and his opposite number Robin Cook try to keep away from each other. The Foreign Secretary was in philosophical mood. He couldn't agree with the American academic that we had reached "the end of history". Instead he took the view that "when one door shuts another slams in your face". This opinion is emphatically not shared by many Tory rightwingers, who believe that the Pax Britannica still rules, or at least rules most people with dusky skins. Nicholas Winterton demanded to know "what the British government is going to do to solve the severe and growing refugee problem in

Bhutan and Nepal". One expected Mr Winterton to demand that the Foreign Secretary send a gunboat. Nepal and Bhutan were both landlocked, and we probably have no gunboats left, but these are minor details to a visionary like Mr Winterton. As for the Foreign Secretary, he reflected sadly that "I cannot claim that the United Kingdom can do anything to make a major impact on that problem." Soon afterwards Mr Rifkind said that the time had come to stop referring to countries such as Ukraine as "part of the former Soviet Union". After all, we did not refer to the United States as "part of the former British Empire". "Shame!" said Mr Winterton (though to be fair, he was grinning at the time). Sir Peter Tapsell intervened to say that we should not take advantage of the present Russian weakness. We had made this mistake in 1939, when we had let down the people of Poland. They had never forgiven us. Clearly this could prove vital. In the new multi-polar world we inhabit, Poland is a multi-polar country. We visited a few more world trouble spots where there was not a whole lot we could do. "The bi-polar world is now behind us," said Mr Rifkind. Mr Rifkind regretted the recent words of the Chinese foreign minister, who made it clear that freedom of speech in Hong Kong next year would not include freedom to criticise senior ministers. We had an "ethical responsibility" to help the people of Hong Kong. Ethics and morals are this week's hot words in British politics. I suspect that they translate as: "We have an absolute duty to wring our hands about the way things are going." By the time Mr Rifkind had sat down, the number of Labour backbenchers had rocketed to 15, but the Tories had fallen back to 10. Mr Cook gave his usual excellent speech, dotted with good jokes, like sultanas. I hadn't realised that the attempt to force the EU to agree with us on beef, the Policy Of Non-Cooperation With Europe, is known to the Foreign Office as "Ponce". But it seems very appropriate.

First night

Just lie back and think of Elvis

Caroline Sullivan

Smoky Joe's Cafe — The Songs of Leiber and Stoller Princes Of Wales Theatre THIS revue could just as easily have been entitled Without Whom, because if Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller hadn't existed, rock 'n' roll might not have, either. In 1956, these wisecracking songwriters succeeded in irredeemably corrupting American youth, their weapons Elvis Presley and a tune called Hound Dog. They followed a 15-year string of hits like Jailhouse Rock, On Broadway and Stand By Me, three fragments of one of American music's classic catalogues. When they appeared on stage for the first time last night, the standing ovation was heartfelt. Now aged 63, they are semi-retired. Not for them an 11th-hour renaissance like that of Burt Bacharach. They still cast a long shadow, not just over the conventions of pop but over the 40 numbers of this show. Greatest-hits musicals are everywhere, most of them exactly like Smokey Joe's. Take one enthusiastic young cast, a costume designer (here William Ivey Long), some scaffolding and you're in business. The audience knows the songs, so provided the actors can sing there's no chance of failure. And the all-American cast, some of them from Smokey Joe's Broadway run, can sing, as well as shimmy. They're acting singers rather than singing actors, which suits a show where there's almost no acting. Whew — no pesky plot development or subtexts, just

a glut of glowing pop tunes. Even before the opening Neighborhood paraded to a halt, you were lying back and happily submitting. The numbers are paraded with no dialogue and barely a pause. But you don't even have to dream up your own imagery; it's all done for you. Initially, the minimalism seems too inadequate to celebrate something as labyrinthine as rock. There's no attempt at chronology, or biography — we're left no wiser about Leiber and Stoller as people. Eventually, however, it falls into place: most songwriters have dull lives, so why not just play the songs? It also provided time to ponder the relationship between African American artists of the 1950s and the white men who supplied their material. The mainly black cast seem to recreate that era, clowning it up in an uncomfortably minstrel-ish way. In the absence of speech, every gesture has had to be exaggerated, but it's rather stunning to see black men playing amiable fools this late in the century. That said, every singer was wonderful, and little Victor Trent Cook and well-upholstered Miss Bl Crumby, very wonderful. Director Jerry Zaks teams them up on several occasions, presumably for comic visual effect, but their vocal rapport is magical rather than comical. Still, good and approachable as the cast were, they were ultimately vehicles for the music. That was proved by the madcap reserved for Leiber and Stoller's walk-on at the end. This review appeared in later editions yesterday.

Horsewomen will go to court

Peter Hetherington

THE Equal Opportunities Commission yesterday backed two women fighting for the right to take part in an annual horse-riding festival in the Scottish Borders. Factory workers Ashley Simpson and Mandy Graham were given £2,500 to take their claim of sexual discrimination to court. The two will serve writs chal-

lenging the right of the all-male Hawick Community Riding Committee to exclude them from the festival, a pageant which involves riding round the boundaries of the town. The EOC said: "The challenge ... is unusual and novel, and the commission, in reaching its decision, realised it had significant implications, particularly in respect of traditional attitudes to women's full participation in all spheres of life."



The Ridings, where 35 teachers are heading towards a strike over pupil indiscipline. Gillian Shephard said the bigger problem was exam under-performance. PHOTOGRAPH BY ROSS PARRY

School faces 'hit squad'

Shephard may order takeover

John Carvel Education Editor

THE Government yesterday set the scene for a winter of discontent at the Ridings school in Halifax when Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, threatened to seize control from the local authority unless it rapidly commits itself to a plan for raising standards. As 35 of the 40 teachers head towards strike action next month, parents of the 600 pupils face several months of possible wrangling between

the staff, the local authority and government officials before ministers are legally entitled to take over. Mrs Shephard said she was taking the exceptional step of ordering an emergency inspection next week. A high-powered team from the Office for Standards in Education will examine the allegations of disciplinary anarchy made by Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, whose members want about 10 per cent of pupils expelled. She said the indiscipline was only "a symptom of big-

ger problems" including serious under-performance in exams. In 1995 1 per cent of GCSE pupils achieved the target of five passes at grade C or above and last year this improved to only 7 per cent. "We cannot tolerate — and nor can parents or the wider public tolerate — a situation where a school is allowed to disintegrate," she said. It was "curious" that the local education authority had not acted already, but if problems like this were not sorted out at local level, the Government had to act. Mike Tomlinson, Ofsted's director of education, said a small team would move into the school next week to audit its management, the quality of teaching, behaviour and provision for children with special needs. He would report verbally to Mrs Shephard within days. Under strict statutory time limits, the school will then

have 40 days to prepare an action plan and the Calderdale local education authority will have 10 days to respond. If the Government and school inspectorate approve, this will form the basis for recovery. If not, Mrs Shephard made it clear she was prepared to send in a squad to take control of the school. Management would be transferred to an education association similar to the team which took over Hackney Downs school in east London last year. Officials indicated last night that if the worst came to the worst, this could happen with minimum consultation in January. The timetable was complicated by Mr de Gruchy's threat of industrial action from mid-November unless the school immediately excludes "impossibly disruptive and violent elements". He denied that the union had a hit

list of 61 children, since the eventual number could be more or less. But at least 20 pupils had been "dumped" on the Ridings after being excluded from other schools. "It would be a surprise if the figure of expulsions were fewer than 20," he said. Calderdale council agreed last night to co-operate fully with the inspection team. Karen Stansfield, headteacher at the Ridings, will not be returning to the school when it re-opens after the half-term break on Monday and preparations were being made to draft in the head of another Calderdale school on temporary attachment. The designated temporary head is on holiday and cannot be contacted to be told his assignment. While Ofsted was planning to delay the inspection until he arrives, the authorities in Calderdale did not expect him to move across until after the inspectors left.

Alice Mahon, Labour MP for Halifax, intervened at the end of Mrs Shephard's news briefing to defend Calderdale council. "The Secretary of State should hang her head in shame. The Conservatives say you can't throw money at a problem, but they have thrown money at grant maintained schools in Halifax." The Ridings school had been left with inadequate resources to handle the pupils who could not get in elsewhere. "This isn't about choice, this is about divisive Conservative education policies," she said. Mrs Shephard said: "There are a whole lot of schools in similar situations that achieve far, far better exam results. It's no good blaming the circumstances a school is in. Good work can be achieved at any school with good leadership and the right targeting of resources by the local authority."



Expelled pupil Jamie Griffiths, 15, with his mother Sheridan Walton. NASUWT teachers say up to 10 per cent of the school's pupils should be dismissed

Countdown

- October 28: Emergency inspection starts, possibly delayed a few days while school finds new head.
October 29: NASUWT strike ballot ends.
November 4: Inspectors report verbally to Mrs Shephard.
November 12: First possible date for strike action.
Mid-November: Mrs Shephard gives school 40 days to draw up action plan.
End December: Calderdale gets 10 days to comment on plan.
Early January: Mrs Shephard either accepts plan, or proposes hit squad.
Mid-January: Two weeks' consultation on handing control to an "education association".

Hamilton ally joins sleaze inquiry

Former defence minister dislikes freedom of 'partisan' media

David Hencke Westminster Correspondent

THE Government last night appointed a strong supporter of disgraced former minister Neil Hamilton and a fierce critic of the freedom of the press to sit in judgment on the cash for questions inquiry. Sir Archibald Hamilton — a former defence minister who also opposed the reforms of Lord Nolan forcing MPs to declare their salaries from consultancies and directorships — joins the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee, just as it about to decide on whether to open its hearings to TV and radio. Last year Sir Archie gave a robust defence on BBC Radio 4 of Mr Hamilton and Jonathan Aitken, both of whom resigned ministerial jobs to the Guardian. He told the BBC on April 11, 1995: "I thought it was very regrettable that Neil Hamilton felt it necessary to resign

and indeed was forced to resign. I think it would have been much better if he stayed in there because ... we're coming under a tremendous amount of slur and innuendo by partisan members of the media to try and get rid of ministers. Somebody has got to stand up and fight this and I think we're all very glad indeed that Jonathan Aitken is doing that. It would have been very good if Neil Hamilton had been able to do the same." Sir Archie joins the committee with the veteran Ernie Ross, Labour MP for Dundee West, after two MPs — Doug Hoyle, Labour MP for Warrington North, and Sir Geoffrey Johnson-Smith — resigned because they were connected with the cash for questions affair. The Labour front bench was not officially commenting last night. But Stephen Byers, Labour MP for Wallsend, speaking as a constituency MP, said: "His appointment does not seem a good

start for a committee which desperately needs to convince the public that it will be open, fair and impartial." Sir Archie has a number of parliamentary consultancies which he has declared in full. He is also a privy counsellor and MP for Epsom and Ewell. He is a director of seven companies, including Saladin Holdings, a security company, three Far East investment houses, and a dairy farm. The companies' most recent records show that Sir Archie was paid up to £5,000 from Saladin, up to £5,000 from both Siam Selective Growth and the First Philippine Investment Trust, and up to £1,000 from Woodgate Farms Dairy. The chairman and con-

trolling shareholder of Saladin is David Walker, a former SAS major and one-time Tory councillor. With the help of lobbying from Sir Archie, Mr Walker has met Foreign Office officials in an effort to obtain contracts for protecting British diplomats and embassies. Labour pledged yesterday to repeal the law that allowed Neil Hamilton to waive his parliamentary privilege to sue the Guardian over the cash for questions scandal. Lord Richard, the Labour Leader of the Lords, called for a parliamentary inquiry into the recent reform of the 300-year-old Bill of Rights. Leader comment, page 8

John Beckwith CBE

IN articles of 24, 25 and 30 July we suggested that Mr John Beckwith was interested in bidding for the Department of Social Security offices. As we reported, Mr Beckwith attended a preliminary meeting to discuss the sale with the DSS advisers, Deloitte and Touche on 21 February. Mr Beckwith made clear to BBC Radio on 24 July, and we now accept that at the time our articles were published, he no longer intended to bid for the DSS properties. He has in fact not bid for them. We apologise to Mr Beckwith for any inconvenience caused.

WHEN CRACKER WENT TO HONG KONG THE PROBLEMS WERE THE MEAT LEAVERS

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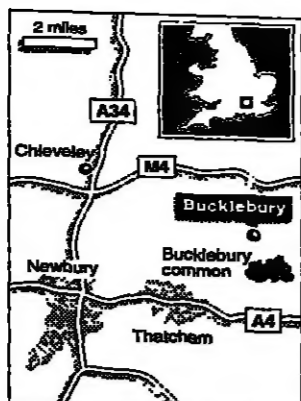
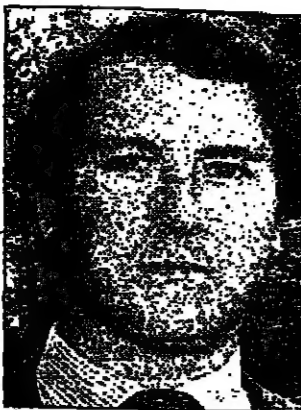
The Guardian Friday October 25 1996

Feudal war

You want a car also own drive. Certainly will be £ payable lord of the

Top taxman

Feudal war in Berkshire



You want to drive a car along your own driveway? Certainly — that will be £50,000 payable to the lord of the manor

Week Chaudhary

THE LORD of the manor and his uppity serfs are to lock horns in the High Court over a land dispute that has cost the villagers of Bucklebury, Berkshire, thousands of pounds for the privilege of parking in their own driveways.

The dispute between millionaire landowner Willie Hartley Russell and the residents of Bucklebury stems from an attempt by Mr Russell to use a medieval ruling which allows him to charge residents for crossing narrow strips of land that lead to their homes.

So far, those who have only pedestrian access to their homes have been exempt; those who have constructed driveways have been charged between £5,000 to £50,000. Up to 150 homes could face hefty bills.

The council claims Mr Hartley Russell, a Newbury district Tory councillor, has no right to charge residents for crossing his land because under a 1929 agreement they are responsible for managing parts of the land, which includes Bucklebury Common.

That has not prevented Mr Hartley Russell from charging residents like Ena and Nick Cornish £5,000 for crossing a strip of land barely 5ft wide that lies outside their home, so that they could park the family car in the driveway.

The couple were also served with a one-year injunction preventing them from driving their cars into their driveway after they contested the bill. After being advised by solicitors, they relented and paid the £5,000.

Mrs Cornish said: "I'm very angry at the fact that he can do this. There's a tiny strip of land outside our house that's part of the local common. I always thought that common land belonged to the common people."

Her husband Nick said: "Mr Hartley Russell might be legally right but morally he's totally wrong. People in this village just want this whole thing sorted out."

"I don't know why he's doing this. It's all a bit out of date now and you would have thought that this type of behaviour was a thing of the past."

Another resident was charged a staggering £50,000 for the privilege of using his 100-yard driveway.

According to locals, an elderly couple used their life savings to pay for the right of access to their home before they eventually sold it and moved out.

"He's not too popular around here at the moment," said a local butcher. "There's a lot of people who are very angry. They don't think he's behaving in a way you expect a lord to behave."



Ena Cornish and the strip of land which Willie Hartley Russell, top, charged her £5,000 to cross

Dr Tim Smith, who paid £25,000 so that he could drive across a small strip of land and park in the front of his house said: "Having listened to both sides of the argument, I am absolutely convinced that Mr Hartley Russell's estate has a weak case and the council has a strong one."

Mr Hartley Russell, aged 35, a flamboyant socialite who lives in a manor house near Bucklebury is said to enjoy skiing and hunting. He inherited the estate, which covers most of the village of Bucklebury, from his father, the Honourable Derrick Hartley Russell but did not inherit his title. Locals, however, still call him lord of the manor.

After the decision to take the dispute to the High Court was announced on Wednesday night he said: "I am delighted the matter is going to be resolved in the only way appropriate to both sides. "It comes down to a point of law that really needs to be sorted out."

Opposition to his levy has won cross-party support from Newbury district council. Deputy leader Tony Ferguson said: "I think there's an element of him trying to assert his feudal rights as lord of the manor and make money out of it. I think Mr Hartley Russell is very much isolated on this issue."

Top taxman 'took bribes' from wealthy

continued from page 1
Hoosiers. In February 1988, Mr Alcock accepted a £250,000 settlement from Mr X, despite the Crown said, having previously demanded at least £500,000.

Mr X allegedly paid for Mr Alcock and a colleague to stay in Nice and be chauffeured around and entertained. In August and September 1988, Mr Alcock, his wife and son enjoyed had a holiday in Nice, flying club class and staying at the Elysee Palace hotel on Mr X's bill.

Counts nine and 10 involve Mr Alcock and Lebanese businessman Marwan Kalo, involved in the Highland

Spring mineral water company. In early 1989, Mr Alcock settled back-tax on terms favourable to Mr Kalo — £50,000, the Crown said. Mr Alcock and a colleague visited Nice to be wine and dine and taken to a casino by Mr Kalo.

Counts 11 and 12 relate to Mr Shamoon, who spent "unimaginable sums at the casino in London" — £39 million in nine years. Mr Alcock shielded Mr Shamoon from revenue inquiries, said Mr Black, in return for a holiday in Marbella with Miss Corrigan.

Count 13 relates to Mr Alcock and Ars Ortemel, a very

wealthy man now living in the United States. In early 1992 the Inland Revenue began to probe his affairs, only to find that Mr Alcock had already done so.

Mr Alcock had allegedly accepted "the most luxurious holiday of all" from Mr Ortemel; he and his family flew to New York with first class tickets, cruised to Bermuda and accepted accommodation in one of New York's best hotels, before taking Concord home.

"It cost in excess of £22,000 — about half his salary," said Mr Black. The case continues on Monday.

Receiver becomes greyhounds' pedigree chum

Dan Atkinson
THE Official Receiver yesterday found himself in charge of one of the most unusual assets to have been unearthed from a failed company — a pack of greyhounds.

Michael Pugh, an Official Receiver for London, is now responsible for racing dogs such as Saddlers Return and High Knight and will also be dealing with their trainers. His deputy, David Chapman, is thought to be doing his best to master details of the dog world in his boss's absence.

The greyhounds are the main — possibly the only —

asset of Anderson Churchill, an investment company in Clerkenwell, London. Anderson, involved in greyhound syndicates, took £900,000 off about 500 investors.

Earlier in the year, the Securities and Investments Board — the chief City supervisor — decided the dogs amounted to an unauthorised investment scheme. It was granted injunctions banning further activity by Anderson and freezing his assets.

This second injunction, the fearsome Mareva order used against Asil Nadir, effectively froze the dogs and the board had to unfreeze them every time their trainers — also

creditors of Anderson — wished to race them. No doubt tiring of all this, the board handed the case to the Trade Secretary, Ian Lane, ultimate boss of the Insolvency Service, on Wednesday.

The dogs have been un-Marsaved and their new owner, the Official Receiver, made "provisional liquidator". Animal lovers can relax — the liquidation will be financial.

Not since the Official Receiver for Tyneside found himself, in 1981, with an office full of wedding dresses (from an insolvent dressmaker) and a dozen sobbing brides has the service taken charge of such peculiar assets.

CJD fears raised by new cases

Alan Watkins and Owen Bowcott

AT LEAST four further suspected cases of the new variant of Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease are being monitored by government research scientists, it was disclosed yesterday.

Fears that the increase could foreshadow a sharp rise in the incidence of the disease — of which 14 cases have been confirmed already — came as it was disclosed that the relatives of one victim have been granted legal aid to sue the Government.

Most of the applications from solicitors representing victims' families have been rejected. In one case, however, the Legal Aid Board has issued a certificate for preliminary legal investigations.

The funding will allow lawyers to explore the possibility of suing for negligence over the way in which the authorities handled the BSE epidemic in cattle and the related disease — known as nvCJD — in humans.

With clinical knowledge of the symptoms of nvCJD restricted to relatively few specialists, there is controversy over the diagnosis of new cases. Confirmation can be made only after death or by biopsy of brain tissue taken from a living sufferer.

Of the 14 confirmed cases, two are still alive. One recent case involved a 16-year-old London girl of Turkish-Cypriot origins. Another is a 51-year-old man from near Birmingham who died several weeks ago.

Dr James Ironside, the neuropathologist in charge of the Government's CJD surveillance laboratory in Edinburgh, yesterday said his unit

was monitoring a handful of suspected cases. "It's a small number, less than five, but it is difficult to assess these further cases," he said.

"The next year or two will be critical. If the disease has a long incubation period you could be looking at thousands of cases."

A policy of secrecy appears to have been adopted by the Department of Health concerning the ages of potential victims.

Among suspected cases known to either the CJD surveillance unit or victims' support groups are understood to be a 15-year-old girl from Glasgow, two women between 20 and 30, a woman in her late 30s and a man aged 35. His condition is said to be deteriorating rapidly. He appears to be a classic case of the new variant with the onset of the disease being signalled by psychiatric disturbance and profound mood and personality changes.

There are other potential but unconfirmed victims. A woman who recently gave birth has complained of symptoms which indicate the possibility of CJD but tests have so far proved inconclusive. There is also mystery surrounding a woman of 43 who died recently in the London area.

The Agriculture Secretary, Douglas Hoag, yesterday defended his department's handling of the affair and disclosed that he had taken legal advice. "Anyone suing us would have to show we were culpable and prove negligence," he said. " hindsight is no help in this matter. We can show what we did at the time was reasonable."

Rescue plan for farmers, page 4

VAT man faces £200m payback

Mark Milner and Julie Wolf

THE Government could be forced to repay up to £200 million after losing the latest battle over Value Added Tax, when the European Court of Justice ruled that Customs & Excise was wrong to charge it on the full price of goods sold at a discount.

Though the two companies at the centre of yesterday's judgment, Argos and the Unilever subsidiary Elida Gibbs, were only claiming £24 million, the ruling will open the way to a flood of claims.

The Treasury said: "At the most extreme, the loss would be no more than £150 million to £200 million in back tax." It added: "Back tax will only be payable if traders can substantiate claims going back 23 years."

Revenue sources indicated that the bill will fall to £70 million if Parliament approves a three-year limit on the period for which VAT can be reclaimed.

Argos claimed it was due a refund of £1.38 million for VAT paid between 1983 and 1985. Elida Gibbs was claiming a refund of £283,894.

Several other large VAT cases are making their way through the legal system. The Revenue is challenging an appeal court ruling handed down in April that it was

wrong in its VAT treatment of interest-free credit deals. Counsel for the Revenue said during the hearing that the decision may mean billions of pounds having to be repaid, though Customs & Excise says the figure will be much smaller.

Potentially the most expensive of the legal challenges is the battle over the imposition of VAT on company cars, with some estimates putting repayments at tens of billions — a suggestion dismissed by the tax authorities. The case is due to be heard by the House of Lords.

Most estimates of the Government's potential liabilities involve the repayment of VAT since the tax was introduced, a period of 23 years. However, a spokesman for Customs & Excise pointed out yesterday that the next finance bill would include a provision to limit the period for which VAT could be claimed to three years. The legislation is certain to be challenged in the courts.

Yesterday's defeat for Customs & Excise is the third big VAT setback in recent years. It was forced to repay £250 million worth of VAT wrongly charged on the medical components in spectacles and £120 million of VAT on membership fees to voluntary sporting bodies.

Notebook, page 11

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Hogg says that Whitehall team will devise contingency scheme for retraining worst-hit victims to grow crops or move to other work

Crisis plan to get farmers out of beef

Wide-ranging restructuring 'is inevitable'

Paul Brown, Owen Bowcott and Stephen Bates

FARMERS hit by the beef crisis may be retrained to grow crops or move into different jobs under contingency plans being prepared by the Government, Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, said yesterday.

Grassland farmers, especially in the West Country and the Welsh and Scottish borders, are heavily dependent on income from beef cattle. Mr Hogg said a far-reaching restructuring of the industry to cope with BSE was inevitable.

Subsidies being paid to farmers were to ease them through the crisis, but a new beef industry based on natural farming methods, with animals traceable from birth to the table, was essential.

Just how much smaller the industry would be had still to be assessed, but it had been acknowledged in Brussels that there would have to be substantial change.

Tim Boswell, junior agriculture minister, said the contingency planning team, including Department of Social Security officials, would assess the effect of the crisis on employment and the need for retraining.

Welfare arrangements for communities that had lost much of their long-term revenue were being considered.

Mr Hogg rejected demands by the European Commission

and the farming industry for a further selective cull of herds which have suffered BSE outbreaks. He said scientific evidence indicated that this would not eradicate the disease any faster.

But reacting to a new study showing the link between BSE and the new human variant of CJD to be a virtual certainty, the commission said the Government should abide by the agreement reached at the Florence EU summit in June to cull up to 130,000 additional cattle from known BSE-infected herds.

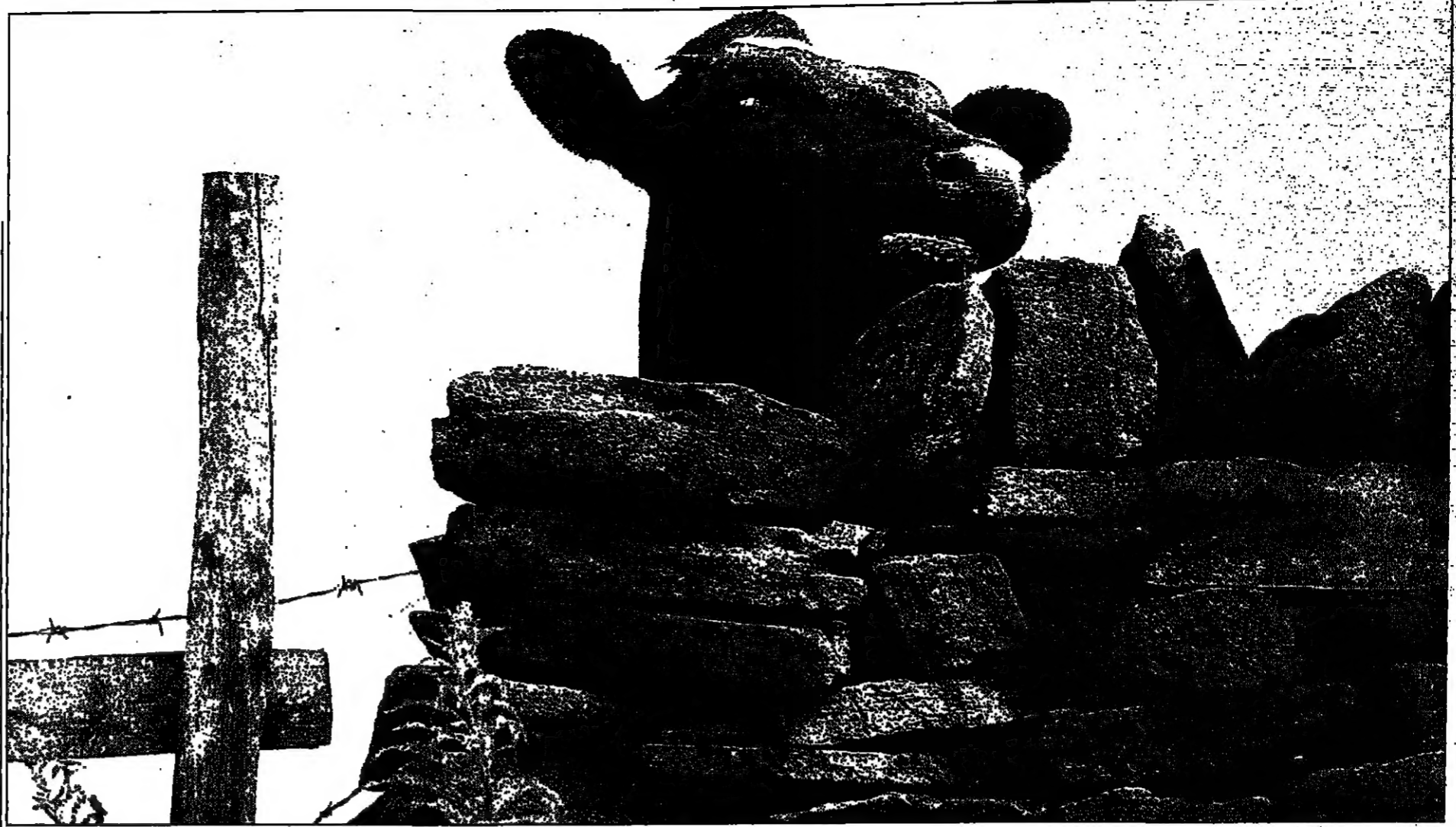
Commission officials maintained that the new findings proved the EU had been right to placate nervous consumers by imposing an export ban on British beef last March.

They warned that any hope of getting the ban lifted depended on Britain's agreeing to a more extensive cull to eradicate the disease more quickly.

Franz Fischer, the Agriculture Commissioner, told a meeting in Paris: "What the British scientists have discovered shows how serious the crisis is."

Sir David Nash, president of the National Farmers Union, continued to lash out at Mr Hogg over his handling of the crisis.

He said he "remained angered at the extent of the mismanagement and stupid delays by the Government during this whole catastrophic affair. Farmers and their families had suffered personally because of this



Head on the block... As new research confirms link between BSE and new form of CJD in humans, pressure from Brussels grows for UK to extend its cattle cull PHOTOGRAPH BY DON WATSON

draudful scourge." He referred particularly to the problem of hill farmers and called for further subsidies to prevent hardship.

Mr Hogg said the Government had allocated another £16.6 million to speed up the

slaughter scheme, which has left farmers with around 400,000 unwanted cattle to feed at the start of winter. Shortage of rendering capacity has meant that only 25,000 carcasses can be processed a week.

The extra money would pay for surplus carcasses to be kept in cold storage until they could be rendered down. Mr Hogg said 45,000 animals had been killed last week, and he hoped a further 55,000 would be destroyed next week.

Refrigerator ships have been among the storage suggestions, and yesterday officials said there was a possibility of mooring two in Belfast Loch.

One of the main complaints of farmers is that some have

been waiting since the crisis broke on March 20 for abattoir space to get rid of their cattle. To avoid the "skulduggery" of queue jumping at markets and abattoirs, the government has introduced a registration scheme. Farmers

have until November 2 to register and get in the queue.

As many as 125 new cases of BSE among cattle are still being diagnosed every week. At the height of the outbreak in 1992 it reached an average of 705.

Denis Maloney, defending, said that Mr Ireland had since written to the captain and crew, apologising for his conduct. "I have conveyed his personal regret to the Chief Constable," he assured the court.

Outlining Mr Ireland's fear of flying, the solicitor said: "He now realises the dreadful consequences which could have followed his actions."

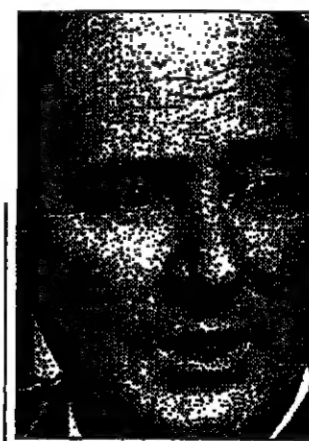
"This is not some brash, loud thug. This is somebody who made a mistake. The drink was in and the wit was out."

Magistrate Mervyn Bates said: "Here was a man who, under the influence of drink, refused to obey the command of the captain, cabin staff and even the RUC Chief Constable." He fined Mr Ireland £600 with a three-month jail sentence, suspended for two years.

"He won't do it again," promised Mr Ireland's solicitor. Neither will Sir Hugh, whose days of regular commuting between his home in England and Northern Ireland are at an end. But maybe it wasn't such a bad end to a chief constable's career.

Drunken sailor at 33,000ft

David Sharrock on a mid-air drama that provided RUC chief's last case



Sir Hugh Annesley took high-level action

IT WAS the final crisis of his police career — in the most unexpected of places. Sir Hugh Annesley, Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, had to step in and subdue a drunken passenger who was trying to open an aircraft cabin door 33,000ft above the Irish Sea.

Seaman John Ireland hung his head in shame yesterday as he stood in the dock of Belfast magistrates' court and listened to an account of how Sir Hugh, who left his post as chief of Northern Ireland's police force last week, attempted to restore order on Jersey European flight GY970.

Mr Ireland, of Belfast, was terrified of flying, the court heard. To calm his pre-flight nerves on October 2, he sought solace in a litre bottle of Jack Daniels bourbon.

By the time the shuttle flight was airborne, Mr Ireland was "very drunk", according to Inspector John Anderson, prosecuting.

"He was shouting and threatening other passengers.

The captain had to leave the flight deck to speak to him, all to no avail. He was restrained with by other passengers, including the Chief Constable of the RUC.

"As the plane came in to land, Ireland refused to fasten his seat belt. Instead he stood up and remained standing while the plane landed."

At the airport, junior police officers were waiting to complete Sir Hugh's arrest. Mr Ireland punched one of them and assaulted a security guard.

After being charged Mr Ire-

land said: "I am really terribly sorry for my conduct," adding that because of the Jack Daniels he could not even remember being on the plane.

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"He won't do it again," promised Mr Ireland's solicitor. Neither will Sir Hugh, whose days of regular commuting between his home in England and Northern Ireland are at an end. But maybe it wasn't such a bad end to a chief constable's career.

Police hunt for lorry driver who dumped hitch girl, 10

Nick Varley

POLICE were last night hunting a lorry driver who picked up a 10-year-old girl hitchhiker and drove her 200 miles before dumping her at a motorway service station.

Holly Naughton, of Dorchester, told a schoolfriend she was planning to go to Blackpool after an incident at school.

But she fell asleep soon after climbing into the cab on the A1(M) near her home on Wednesday evening.

When she awoke yesterday morning and told the driver, a carpet dealer, that she was running away from home, he pulled into services on the M5 in Somerset.

He called her parents and told them of the whereabouts

of their daughter, whom it was feared had been abducted after being spotted getting into the lorry.

A motorist, who had heard of the huge police hunt, recognised her and alerted officers.

Inspector Nick Whitehouse of South Yorkshire police said inquiries were continuing into why she was picked up and driven so far.

"We would like to speak to the lorry driver to establish whether this was a journey that was undertaken naively."

"Any motorist picking up a 10-year-old girl to keep her away from the danger of a motorway would normally take her to the nearest police station or alert police."

Holly's mother and a police officer were due to pick her up from Somerset police last night.

Prostitutes beat BT crackdown

PROSTITUTES are receiving help to get round British Telecom's crackdown on their telephone box advertising from an unexpected quarter — British Telecom, writes Stuart Miller.

The company planned to cut off any telephone numbers found printed on the cards. But an embarrassed BT yesterday admitted that prostitutes were now selling their services using personalised 07000 numbers.

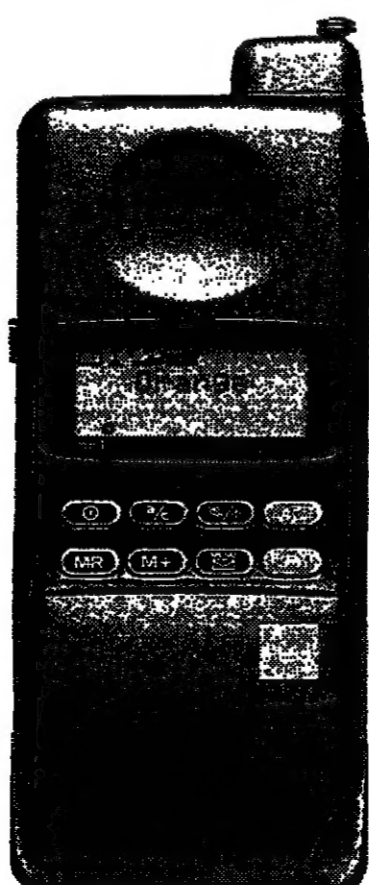
These divert calls to any phone the subscriber wants, but the owner of the number cannot be traced by BT, because of data protection rules.

Those wishing to take up the service simply contact BT's information line and an operator will put them in touch with a company supplying the 07000 numbers.

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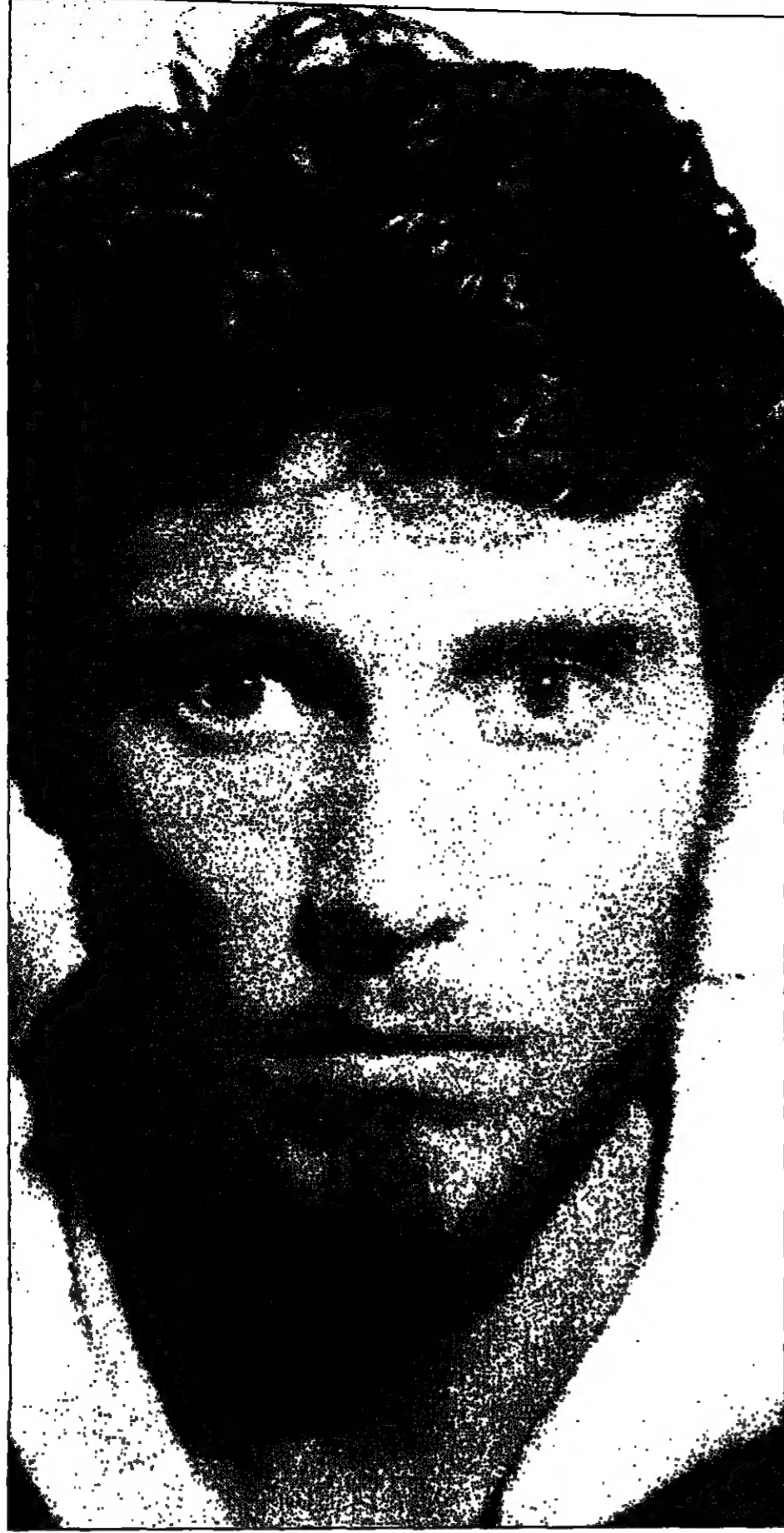
Simpson (who used to do the typing while Galton stared blankly or rolled on the floor seeking inspiration) has given up writing. Now he's president of Hampton Court football club — a role he plays with Ron Atkinson-like gusto. Stuart Jeffries meets the creators of Hancock

Friday Review page 6

Handwritten scribble at the bottom of the page.

Martin Wainwright on care-in-the-community deaths

Anger at inquiry into sick killer



Schizophrenic Anthony Smith... He was discharged from hospital and sent home, despite his father's warning that he was 'a ticking timebomb'

AFATHER is considering legal action following the exoneration of medical inquiry into the care-in-the-community treatment of a schizophrenic who murdered his mother and young stepbrother in a frenzied attack with a knife and spiked baseball bat.

The charity Sane and relatives of Anthony Smith, aged 25, who was committed to Rampton secure hospital after the killings in August last year, condemned the inquiry's view that no individuals were to blame in spite of "failures and weaknesses" in medical supervision.

The killings came four weeks after Smith was discharged from Derby City general hospital and sent home in spite of the alarm of his family. His father Peter, an accountant from Sandiacre, Derbyshire, who had warned that Anthony was "a ticking timebomb", yesterday described the conclusion as "cowardly".

He is considering legal action over alleged failure of care, possibly in tandem with lawyers acting for his son, who is to see a solicitor at Rampton next week. Marjorie Wallace, chief executive of Sane, said: "I am truly shocked. All the warning signs were there and they were ignored."

"Anthony Smith should have been sectioned under the Mental Health Act and given six months to stabilise his condition before being discharged. That he was sent back to his family against their wishes is quite unforgivable."

The Southern Derbyshire mental health trust said that changes recommended in the inquiry report would be implemented, but welcomed the lack of "serious blame" of individuals. Andy Clayton, medical director, said: "Usu-

ally acts of this kind follow a long history of violence, but occasionally, as in this case, they can occur with someone who appears to be doing well, with no clear warning."

The five-strong inquiry team, headed by Sir John Wood, of Sheffield University, described how Smith had appeared "a pleasant and reasonably co-operative young man", but his father had warned doctors that his son kept weapons under his bed and refused to take his prescribed drugs.

He turned on his mother Gwendoline, aged 48, and his 11-year-old stepbrother David on the day that a letter arrived from the health authority confirming an appointment with his consultant a month later.

Sir John said that it had soon become clear that "enough was going wrong" with Smith's care in the community to justify a speedy review of the discharge.

But weak communication and the lack of a clear chain of responsibility at the trust had worked against this, he said.

The report concludes: "The system markedly lacked the ability to react quickly to the warning signs. With hindsight, there are many concerned who would have acted differently and will deeply regret their failure to do so. No serious blame, however, can be attached to any one person."

Smith admitted manslaughter on grounds of diminished responsibility at Nottingham crown court in March, and was sent to Rampton without limit of time.

Peter Smith, who sat through a press conference to launch the report, said: "They are not prepared to take responsibility. They have glossed over everything and made it sound more like a clerical error than anything else."



Smith's mother, Gwen, and stepbrother, David, both killed in frenzied attacks with knife and spiked baseball bat

'System lacked the ability to react quickly to warning signs. With hindsight, there are many concerned who would have acted differently and will deeply regret their failure to do so. No serious blame, however, can be attached to any one person'

- Inquiry report

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Blazing Islam leaves Koran in ashes

SOME villages are flattened by bombs. Others are shelled and rocketed to destruction. Neither fate is as shocking as death by fire. The killers move among the terrified people, torching and burning in full view of their victims.

"Everything is gone," screamed Nazwar, a middle-aged woman as her teenage daughter stood blankly behind her. "My grain is burning. My house is burning. My life is burning. Please, please tell them not to attack civilian areas."

The smell of charred wood hung in the air. Several doors in the tall mud-brick walls along the winding village street showed signs of having been kicked in. Within the once intimate family compounds blackened roofbeams lay in dust and rubble.

The fighting north of Kabul

since the Taliban seized the Afghan capital last month has killed and wounded scores of civilians. Bombs dropped from a Taliban plane left 20 people, mostly children, dead in the town of Kalakan yesterday. But no atrocity has been as cold-blooded as the collective punishment which the ultra-fundamentalist Taliban militias inflicted on the hamlet of Sarchesma.

Only four of its 120 homes are unscathed. Half a dozen lorries piled high with the remains of people's livelihood lurched along the dirt road in the opposite direction as we drove in. Women and children perched on top, men hung from the sides.

The burning released a huge cloud of smoke which drifted over the Taliban and opposition alliance front lines on Tuesday.

It was only yesterday, in a brief lull in the fighting, that

JONATHAN STEELE meets the villagers of Sarchesma, burnt out by angry Taliban

As people slowly calmed down, the story began to emerge.

The Taliban entered the village at the weekend, summoned everyone to the central square, and ordered them to hand in their weapons.

IN ALMOST every rural Afghan home a gun is treated as an heirloom and a necessity. "People said it was dangerous to give up their weapons," Khairuddin said. "The Taliban said: 'Don't worry. We are your security. We are your bodyguards'."

When the guns were handed over, the Taliban

warned the villagers to report any sign of Ahmed Shah Massoud's forces trying to infiltrate Sarchesma. The villagers are Tajiks, and it was highly likely that Commander Massoud, the main Tajik leader and defence minister in the ousted government, would try to move in. In recent days his forces have been spreading through the towns and villages west of the main road north from Kabul.

The Taliban returned to their base on a hill outside Sarchesma. Early next morning the villagers woke to find Massoud people had sneaked in during the night. They fired on the Taliban from the

shelter of the village. The Taliban responded with the rocket attack which killed Khairuddin's family. After a day of intermittent exchanges the Massoud forces withdrew.

RETRIBUTION soon followed. Between 20 and 30 Taliban entered the village next morning. Systematically they poured petrol on the houses and set them ablaze. Nizamuddin, a middle-aged farmer, showed the pile of scorched and blackened grain in his storehouse. Recently harvested, it represented a large part of his income for the year.

"Who's to blame for this?" we asked. There was a long silence before a woman said: "We're poor. How can we know?"

"If we say, the Taliban will kill us," Nizamuddin chipped in. "Are these good Mus-

lims?" he said sarcastically. "They are the best Muslims in the world, and they burn our homes."

A younger neighbour, Nizamuddin, produced a metal bowl containing a pile of ash. "This is the Koran," he exclaimed, his voice rising with outrage. One could just make out the edges of charred pages.

"Tyants, tyrants," he shouted, making it clear he meant the Taliban with their much-vaunted belief in the strictest possible interpretation of Islamic sharia law.

"This is the book of God. Why are you doing this? You can kill us, but don't burn our book. We pay honour to the ashes of the Koran. The Koran is the book of God."

Sajida, a 40-year-old widow, guided us into the compound of her home. It was the familiar scene of charred beams, ruined grain, and mounds of

rubble. "I escaped from fighting in Kabul four years ago. Unfortunately this fighting follows me everywhere," she wailed.

Sajida said she had no relatives in Kabul to go to. For the past two nights the women of the village slept on the carpeted floor of the mosque. It was one of the few buildings the Taliban spared. Sajida said she was planning to spend a third night there.

Close by several houses appeared to have been destroyed at a much earlier date. The tops of the smashed walls were rounded by years of rain and snow. Nizamuddin said Sarchesma had been a mujahedin stronghold during the Soviet occupation and was repeatedly bombed and rocketed by the Russians.

"You know, we killed more than 40 Russian soldiers here before they never ever burned our village down."

News in brief

Saudis question bomb suspects

SAUDI ARABIA has arrested 11 people in connection with the explosion which killed 19 Americans in United States military quarters in Dammam in June, according to the Beirut daily al-Bayrak, which is close to Saudi official circles.

It said the Saudi authorities had "dismantled a sabotage network and arrested the saboteurs who planned or carried out the blast", adding that the detainees were being "interrogated minutely and in utmost secrecy".

The interior minister, Prince Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz, was awaiting the outcome of the investigation to name "the instigators, their plans, the executors, parties that financed them from abroad, and the country that hosted their meetings," the paper added.

It said the 11 were linked to "elements" involved in the explosion at the national guard headquarters in the Saudi capital Riyadh last November in which seven people, five of them American, died. Four Saudis who confessed to that explosion have been executed. — *Reuters, Beirut.*

High-seas cocaine coup

AN INTERNATIONAL drugs squad has claimed the biggest high-seas cocaine seizure on record. Colonel Leonardo Gallego, chief of the Colombian anti-drugs police, said Colombian, Ecuadorian and United States agents found at least 7 tonnes of cocaine on a fishing boat bound for the Mexican port of Manzanillo. At least 4.5 tonnes and possibly 7 tonnes remained concealed, he believed.

He said the shipment probably belonged to a new gang of traffickers formed by survivors of the largely dismantled Medellín and Cali cartels. — *Reuters, Bogotá.*

Chirac pleads for Iraq

PRESIDENT Jacques Chirac of France appealed to the United Nations yesterday to make good the agreement to let Iraq sell limited amounts of oil to buy food and medicine. He told the Jordanian parliament: "France is alarmed at the humanitarian situation in Iraq, and calls solemnly on the international community to apply at long last Resolution 986." — *Reuters, Amman.*

Grounds for complaint



SPANISH undertakers clog central Madrid with hearsees to press for the liberalisation of their business, hampered, they say, by local monopolies breaching the constitutional guarantee of "free circulation of people and goods through the national territory". PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL WHITE

French guide to sex on TV

FRANCE'S main television channels have agreed to introduce on-screen symbols indicating the sex and violence content of films, documentaries and series. From November 16, a green circle will suggest that parental consent is advisable, an orange triangle will warn that the programme could upset young viewers, and a red square will mark "works of an erotic character or with a great deal of violence".

The agreement was promoted by the French broadcasting watchdog, the Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel, whose spokeswoman said: "Cutting films is anathema in France. Even private channels are only allowed one advertising break during a feature film. This measure protects film-makers from censorship by the channels and provides parents with an at-a-glance appraisal."

A Socialist deputy, Séguéne Royal, said: "Not only does the system legitimise violent films, it publicises them." — *Alex Dumas Smith, Paris.*

Poles approve abortion bill

THE Polish lower house of parliament voted yesterday to overturn a senate veto and reinstate the bill it passed in August to liberalise the abortion laws, allowing pregnancies to be ended before the 12th week, but only after counselling and a period of reflection. — *Reuters, Warsaw.*

With the uproar came the accusation that the film I was making was actually about the present day. With that, the real trouble began.

Neil Jordan on Michael Collins

Friday Review page 2



A villager shows the bloodstained veil and plastic shoes worn by his daughter when she and his three grandsons were killed by a Taliban rocket. PHOTOGRAPH: ALAN GIBN

Zaireans and Hutus flee as Tutsi fighters close in

Chris McGreal in Kigali

TUTSI fighters were bearing down on the panic-stricken city of Bukavu in eastern Zaire last night as government troops continued to flee from a powerful week-long offensive.

The rapid advance of the Banyamulenge — Tutsis who have lived in the area for generations — raised the spectre of conflict consuming the whole of eastern Zaire as Eishasa threw in more troops and again accused Rwanda of invading.

Hundreds of thousands of Hutu refugees from Rwanda and Burundi were moving from their camps before the Banyamulenge advance. The exodus was swelled by Zairean civilians.

The United Nations — which is preparing to evacuate staff — warned of a vast humanitarian crisis, saying there is only sufficient food to last three days for those refugees who remain in camps. Delivery routes were cut off.

Banyamulenge fighters have taken at least three towns in recent days and were reported to have moved to within 10 miles of Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu province.

Zaire's army, which has put up little effective resistance, said it was bringing in heavy weapons to defend the city. Planeloads of troops have arrived.

"People are as terrified of what the army might do before it retreats as they are of the Banyamulenge. Most of us expect a looting and killing spree by the army," an aid worker said.

Zaire claimed to have captured Rwandan soldiers, saying it was evidence that Rwanda had invaded in support of the Banyamulenge. Refugees and Zairean troops fleeing

into Bukavu also claimed to have seen large numbers of Rwandan troops.

The president, Mobutu Sese Seko, convalescing in Switzerland after surgery for prostate cancer, called on Zaireans to defend their country, but his slackening

'People are as terrified of the army as they are of the Banyamulenge'

grip on power appears to have contributed to the crisis. Switzerland extended his visa yesterday, which suggests that he is more seriously ill than is being admitted.

Rwanda denies that its troops have crossed the border, saying Zaire is trying to distract world attention from the persecution of the Banyamulenge by Rwandan Hutu refugees and the Zairean authorities.

But Claude Dusaidi, political advisor to General Paul Kagame, Rwanda's vice-president and the head of its army, said the government sympathised with the Banyamulenge cause.

He believed they would seize Bukavu and carve out a safe area in the east, a prelude to demanding negotiations with the government.

"But when you start a war you never know where it will end. If the government doesn't want to talk, the sky's the limit. Maybe they'll reach Kinshasa."

Asked to explain the success of Banyamulenge fighters if they were not receiving external help, Mr Dusaidi cited the poor quality of the Zairean troops. A Banyamulenge spokesman claimed that the fight was backed by a series of rebel groups seeking auton-

omy for other parts of Zaire.

The United States, Belgium and France have launched initiatives to contain the fighting. Belgium is acting as an intermediary between Zaire and its neighbours. France has revived its proposals for a regional conference. Mr Dusaidi is dismissive.

"The French want a regional conference. To do what? The problem is in Zaire. They should ask Zaire why it kills its own citizens. The French want to obfuscate things and direct attention from the real issues because their interests might be threatened," he said.

Fighting has spilled back into Burundi. Three Hutu rebels were killed in the border province of Cibitoke, where the governor was assassinated on Tuesday.

Shyam Bhatia in Amman

THREE Jordanians who stockpiled stolen army landmines and allegedly planned to blow up Israeli tourists have been arrested by King Hussein's security services. Twenty-five mines had been dug from a minefield near the Israeli border and buried in a village garden north of Amman.

The plot was uncovered by chance last week when the men put the mines into plastic bags and asked a taxi driver to take them to the crusader fortress of Ajlun, a popular destination for Israeli tourists. Another passenger, who was a serving army officer, alerted a police patrol.

When the taxi was stopped, police discovered 11 anti-tank and 14 anti-personnel mines. An explosives expert detonated seven of the mines,

which the would-be assassins had tried to prise open.

Security officials in Amman said Ibrahim Mahmoud, aged 26, and Abdel Rahim Ahmed, aged 27, were allegedly helped by an army lieutenant who had told them where the mines were planted, and had instructed them on how to dig them out safely.

Some of the mines were then buried in Mr Mahmoud's garden. Others were stockpiled in a nearby cave.

Relatives have described the three men, from the village of Hashimiya, as childhood friends and Islamic ideologues opposed to King Hussein's peace treaty with Israel. "They are not members of any political group," Mr Mahmoud's father told police. "They consider themselves good Muslims and good citizens. Perhaps they believed that peace with Israel

would improve their lives, but two years after the peace treaty all they face is more poverty and unemployment."

Their frustration is shared by an increasing number of Jordanians. The king recently warned a visiting Israeli politician that the majority of Jordanians were now openly questioning the wisdom of befriending Israel.

Since the election of Binayamin Netanyahu as prime minister, in May, Jordanian-Israeli relations have deteriorated to a point where the king avoids meeting visiting Israeli officials. Mr Netanyahu's chief foreign policy adviser, Dov Charney, has been waiting several weeks for an appointment. Israel's ambassador in Amman, Shimon Shamir, increasingly finds himself isolated and enveloped by a hostile atmosphere.

Leader comment, page 5

Jordanians 'planned to blow up tourist site'

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Vatican for another summit

Paris home and a new

Scythian prince tomb unearthed

0171 6161000

Vatican poised for another UN summit row

John Hooper in Rome

ROMAN Catholic anti-abortionists are exploiting the run-up to next month's World Food Summit to try and reverse decisions reached at the United Nations' Cairo and Beijing conferences on population and women, the International Planned Parenthood Federation said yesterday.

The IPPF made its claim as the Vatican publicly aligned itself with the Third World on a range of issues expected to figure prominently at the summit.

Due to be held in Rome from November 13 to 17, the summit is the latest in a series of high-profile gatherings organised by UN agencies to draw attention to global problems and reach agreement on how they should be tackled.

Mr Wilson, a friend of the former US ambassador to the UN, played an influential role in Washington's adoption in 1984 of the so-called Mexico City policy. This denied funds to international organisations seen as promoting abortion.

The IPPF said yesterday that there was still no agreement on a paragraph in the Rome summit's draft Plan of Action which urged governments to devise "appropriate

population policies, programmes and family planning services to allow for responsible parenthood", as agreed in Cairo. The federation's secretary-general, Ingar Bruggemann, said a "consensus on reproductive freedom and rights has been assailed by those who wish to keep women in the dark ages".

The link between hunger and population is one of several controversial issues to be debated next week when the final preparatory session is held to agree on the wording of the conference document. Several rich countries, led by the US, have objected to the phrase "right to food". They fear that making food a right could make them liable to legal action by Third World countries in pursuit of aid or special trade provisions.

Yet the opening words of a document released by the Vatican yesterday unequivocally stated that the "right to food" was a fundamental principle.

The document, produced by the Vatican's "aid ministry", Cor Unum, also noted that aid from the richer countries had fallen from a mere 0.33 per cent of their combined gross domestic product. This was less than half the target figure of 0.7 per cent of GDP fixed by the UN four years ago.

Cor Unum repeated the Vatican's long-standing criticism of the US embargo on trade with Cuba and Iraq, saying such sanctions always hurt civilians most. The Vatican is set to annoy Washington even more when the summit takes place. Among those who have accepted an invitation from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation is Fidel Castro. The Cuban leader is expected to be given a cordial reception at the Vatican during his stay in Rome.

Paris homeless find a new hero

Alex Daviel Smith in Paris

THE misery is different but the mission the same. In March 1995, General Philippe Morillon mounted an armoured personal carrier and told the people of Srebrenica: "You are under my protection."

Now, France's greatest military hero since De Gaulle has thrown in his lot with the homeless of Paris.

But as he sits in the tranquil autumnal garden behind his office, a few doors up from the Rodin museum, the now-retired general knows the odds are stacked against him even more than they were in the besieged Muslim enclave.

In Srebrenica, which he temporarily saved by promising to stay, Gen Morillon defied the bureaucratic inertia of the United Nations. To ordinary people he was Beau Geste. Lady Thatcher said he "gave us a spark of leadership and courage". Alain Juppé, then foreign minister, called him "General Courage".

In Paris, they have stopped counting the cardboard boxes with people inside. Gen Morillon, who is 61 today wants to draw attention to them.

He said: "I want to be among them — to be the person who listens and advises, not just a figurehead." Every Tuesday, he has lunch in a soup kitchen near the Louvre.

A devout Roman Catholic, he is backing the plans of a priest he has known for 30 years to open a college in central Paris where a dozen young people will spend a year studying the Scriptures and providing practical assistance to the homeless.

Homelessness and spiritual renewal are unfashionable causes, but Gen Morillon has made a career of them.

Born in Morocco, he trained at Saint-Cyr military academy and was sent to Algeria.

As a lieutenant in the armoured cavalry, he sided with the rebels who opposed De Gaulle's willingness to grant independence to the colony. A low-ranking officer, he escaped official censure but spent several years in desk jobs.

The generals probably thought the Bosnian quagmire would be too much even for him when they named him commander of the UN protection force in 1992.

In a recent book, Paroles de Soldat (published by Balland), he reveals himself an apologist for military service and the "machine of hope" which he believes the UN must continue to be.

He said: "My stance at Srebrenica marked a turning point in the UN's view of peacekeeping. After 40 years of peacekeeping, we realised... that neutrality must never condemn us to passivity."

Scythian prince's secret tomb unearthed near Kiev

Jane Parlez in Kiev

ASPECTACULAR Scythian tomb, a prince and his gold and silver possessions has been unearthed in a field 80 miles from the Ukrainian capital, Kiev.

Archaeologists say the find may change the way historians regard one of the world's most celebrated nomadic cultures.

Lying on his back with his gold-handled sword in his left hand, the prince was in a sealed catacomb that suggests a more settled way of life and death — than the Scythians are known for.

area stretching from the Danube east to the Caucasus. The find, uncovered in July by Ukrainian and Polish team of archaeologists as the discovery in more than 150 years.

One remarkable detail is that the grave includes an oval-like apparatus, indicating that the nomadic Scythians adapted in some ways to the settled habits of the Sarmatians, who lived in the forest steppe where the grave was located.

The discovery is also extraordinary, the archaeologists said, because all artifacts — from an intricate Greek silver cup to the prince's gold neck-collar — were in mint condition and were found just as they had been placed during the burial 2,300 years ago.

Tens of thousands protest across country over collapse of pay talks and plan to cut sickness benefits



Workers protesting at sick-pay reductions make their point with a mock sickbed outside the Thyssen steel mill in Duisburg-Ramborn yesterday. PHOTOGRAPH: KARL-HEINZ KREFFELS

German engineers in lightning strike

Ian Traynor in Weimar

ENGINEERING workers downed tools in lightning strikes across Germany yesterday and marched in protest at the collapse of pay talks and at government-blessed plans to cut sick-pay.

From Bavaria in the south to the Ruhr industrial region in the north-west, tens of thousands of trade unionists flexed their muscles in a one-day protest after three days of negotiations with the engineering employers' federation on 1997 pay levels ended in stalemate.

"The mood is one of rage and disappointment," said a spokeswoman for the engineering union, IG Metall. Employers branded the stoppages illegal and said the strikers were only hurting themselves as the protests would lead to more job losses at a time of record unemployment in Germany.

last month abolished the long-standing provision of full-wage sick-pay, cutting it to 80 per cent. The move was part of a broader package of cuts aimed at trimming next year's budget deficit to 3 per cent of gross domestic product, the key criterion for joining a single currency.

However, attempts by companies such as Daimler-Benz to cut sick-pay instantly, in breach of existing labour contracts, brought employees on to the streets. In a few days of industrial strife, Daimler lost more money than it would have saved through the cuts and beat a retreat. Many other flagship firms such as Siemens and Volkswagen have agreed to keep sick-pay at 100 per cent in the interim.

some key employers in the engineering sector are looking to save face with a formula that would keep the industrial peace while allowing both sides to claim victory.

With Germany's economy generally moving out of stagnation, there are signs that individual companies will do specific deals even if the sectoral bargaining remains deadlocked. Volkswagen's labour director yesterday called for a compromise that would continue paying out full wages during sick leave.

Tennessee voters are loyal to personalities rather than parties. Martin Walker reports from Memphis

Sax appeal woos bluesmen

I N B.B. King's blues club on Beale Street, the only sign that an election is under way is a discreet Clinton-Gore bumper sticker under the "Performing Tonight" posters.

It is the kind of place where the whites dress casual and the blacks are impeccable in double-breasted suits and costume jewellery, where the barbecue ribs are as sweet as the music in this city that bred the blues.

The proportions are just right. The stage is bigger than the bar, and the Preston Shannon band is playing mean rockabilly blues that could have come from B.B. King's own guitar — which hangs in a glass case on the wall.

"Heck yes, I'm gonna vote — we always voted in Memphis," says John Williams, taking a cigarette break after playing what he's known for along the Mississippi river — one of the finest blue-guitar solos you're ever likely to hear.

lapel of his suit. "That ain't it. But I tell you one thing, this is the quietest election I ever did see."

Just down Beale Street, beyond the local cop precinct house that is also a 24-hour police museum, there is a huge green banner that says proudly: "Elect Silky O'Sullivan to Congress — District 9."

Right alongside is Silky O'Sullivan's bar, with the motto "Every Day is St Patrick's Day". Inside, the bar is pasted with testimonials to Silky as a world statesman taking Memphis barbecued pork to Moscow in 1990 in his "Pig-O-Stroika" mission, and a huge portrait of Elvis labelled "Another satisfied customer".

ries Tennessee's 11 electoral college votes. It would be a profound humiliation for Al Gore if the Democrats falter in his home state, and a setback to his hopes of winning the Democratic succession in 2000.

That explains why the vice-president has been home campaigning in Tennessee 10 and five of the nine House seats.

This time, the one Senate seat being contested is almost certain to be held by Fred Thompson, the folksy and popular 61-year-old Republican lawyer-turned-actor. He leads in the polls by two to one, and his poll lead is helped along by President Clinton's attack

on tobacco as "the delivery system for the addictive drug of nicotine" — in a state where tobacco comes second to cotton as the major crop.

The Democrats have a sporting chance of winning back two of the congressional seats they lost two years ago, but the curious feature of

times, and why his wife, Tipper Gore, is campaigning here when her husband is campaigning elsewhere.

Tennessee politics is the way it is becoming a bell-wether for the way the whole country votes.

Voter registration is the key. One third of voters are registered as Democrats, one third as Republicans, and one third as independents.

"If more people get out to vote for President Clinton, it will build the turnout of people likely to vote for other Democrats. But you can't count on it. The question will be: will it help enough? You can't poll that sort of thing."

Thompson has coat-tails, and I don't think Bill Clinton does either," says the state Democratic chairman, Will Cheek, who is telling all his candidates that they have to win on their own, rather than counting on Clinton-Gore and the national party ticket to carry them home.

"I'm more people get out to vote for President Clinton, it will build the turnout of people likely to vote for other Democrats. But you can't count on it. The question will be: will it help enough? You can't poll that sort of thing."

Back in the B.B. King blues club, an agricultural engineer called Chuck McGuire is sucking on a Budweiser and sporting a T-shirt that reads: "Bill Clinton loves the blues; Helena blues festival, Arkansas."

Republicans fight for Congress

Jonathan Freedland in Washington

REPUBLICAN strategists have all but written off Bob Dole's chance of winning the presidency and put their money yesterday on keeping control of Congress.

Mr Dole was dealt a fresh blow yesterday when the Texan billionaire Ross Perot rebuffed his plea to drop out of the presidential race and endorse the Republican ticket. Mr Perot called the request "weird and totally inconsequential", and said he was in the race to stay.

Clearly signalling their pessimism, party leaders are now urging voters to assume that Bill Clinton will be re-elected, but deny him a "blank cheque" in the form of a Democratic House and Senate.

sents their congressional candidates' best argument, even though it assumes Mr Dole's defeat.

Yesterday they produced a leaflet featuring a rogues' gallery of left-leaning politicians who would occupy the key positions in a Democrat Congress. They include Edward Kennedy as chair of the Senate labour committee and Congressman Richard Gephardt as House Speaker.

The leadership has given its official blessing to congressional candidates who want to distance themselves from Bob Dole and deploy the blank cheque argument.

Television ads using the blank cheque image are reported to be in production. But the congressional race remains nail-bitingly close. The Democrats need a net gain of just 19 House seats and three in the Senate to

retake both chambers. Detailed polls show both contests are too close to call, and there is the distinct possibility that control will rest on razor-thin majorities.

With 469 different contests, each with its own idiosyncrasies, prediction is perilous. However, the Republicans' newest tactic marks an attempt to turn their presidential candidate's weakness into an advantage, by persuading voters that it is Mr Dole's very failure that requires them to vote Republican at local and state level.

The polls show that one in 10 undecided voters will choose a Republican if they are convinced that Mr Clinton will win.

The plan relies on the American habit of ticket-splitting, which suggests that they actively prefer separate control of the legislature and

executive. "Americans like gridlock," the Republican consultant William McInturff said. "They like Bill Clinton, but they don't want to give him a blank cheque."

The irony of the approach is that it makes Bob Dole a victim of Newt Gingrich for the second time.

Many analysts believe he has lagged in the polls all year because of the public backlash against Mr Gingrich's leadership in Congress. Now he seems likely to be sacrificed so that Mr Gingrich can retain his Speaker's chair.

The Clinton team has kept quiet about its congressional ambitions. The president promotes individual candidates on the sly but never urges the return of a Democrat congress; its deep unpopularity in 1994 led to that year's Republican landslide.

Street fighting in Japan over vending machine booze

Questions are being asked about the 'no questions asked' drink dispensers, Jonathan Watts reports in Tokyo

A CROWD of teenagers at a bar in central Tokyo chanted the Japanese mantra "Down-in-one", reaching a crescendo as one of their number gulps down the last drops of her beer.

A few minutes later, after a second round, she collapses, semi-conscious. Japanese law prohibits the sale of alcohol to anyone under the age of 20 but, as the owner of the bar said, "They

are under age — but the law is a joke. They could go and get as much beer as they wanted, no questions asked, from any street corner vending machine."

Japan is the only country in the world where alcohol is sold from vending machines. An estimated 186,000 of them nationwide dispense beer, sake (distilled liquor), whisky and wine. It is also a country with a growing alcohol problem. But despite government calls for the removal of alcohol vending machines, they are as ubiquitous as ever.

Japan has more than one vending machine for every 30 people, the highest ratio in the world. Selling everything from soft drinks to sex aids, they have become an established feature since their introduction in the 1950s.

and party because, it is said, they allow shame-conscious Japanese to purchase goods that they would otherwise feel embarrassed to buy.

However, in recent years the vending machines that sell alcohol have become a growing cause for concern. Recent surveys indicate there are more under age drinkers than ever, half of whom admit their main supply was vending machines.

This has prompted tax and health officials, and some local authorities, to call for alcohol vending machines to be removed from the streets.

The All Japan Liquor Merchants Association agreed to co-operate in December 1994, but since then there has been little progress. Only about 8 per cent of the machines have been phased out, and no deadline has been set for the removal of the rest.

Instead, brewers and vending-machine makers have proposed waiting until a system is developed to enable them to read identity cards and check a buyer's age.

While alcohol consumption has declined in most countries in the past 20 years, it has risen rapidly in Japan, particularly among women. But the problems associated with heavy drinking are still not fully recognised, despite the emergence of expressions such as "necktie (businessman) alcoholic" and "kitchen (housewife) drinker" to describe new social phenomena.

The Observer advertisement showing the newspaper cover and text: 'The Observer is the world's original Sunday newspaper established over 200 years ago and because the Observer is available in 50 countries worldwide, you're guaranteed a quality read wherever you travel.'

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Large vertical advertisement on the left edge of the page, partially obscured and mostly illegible. Visible words include 'ashes', 'planned', 'rist site', and 'African'.

Turning from the abyss

Mr Netanyahu needs to change course: now

A YEAR AFTER the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, Israel — and the Palestinians — are still counting the cost. The atmosphere swirls with anguish and apprehension, intolerance and fanaticism. The peace process has been knocked off its course: the only question is whether it is going sideways or in reverse. What consensus there was among Jews, among Arabs, and between the two communities, has been sharply reduced; the only question is whether it survives at all. Looking back a year later (Israel observed the anniversary yesterday according to the Jewish calendar — the actual date is November 4), many are asking the hardest question of all: has the assassin actually won?

After Mr Rabin was gunned down, the Israeli people drew together briefly and pledged re-commitment to the peace process. But it was a shaky reconciliation to which the hard-core Likud only assented reluctantly and because it was politically impossible to do otherwise. Even then there were fundamentalists who openly applauded Yigal Amir. A year on, there is far more evidence of discord than of common endeavour in Israeli society. "How quickly the national memory dried up," writes a commentator this week in Yediot Aharanot, "how fast the tears evaporated. . . . A year after the assassination of the prime minister, and we have not yet learned to live with each other. We have not learned to talk to each other." A Jewish extremist pours scalding tea on a Knesset member who has gone to talk to a mixed meeting of Jewish and Palestinian women. Right-wingers object to the Song of Peace — which Mr Rabin joined in singing minutes before he was gunned down — being used at a planned memorial meeting. There are a few brave efforts to bridge the gap of comprehension within and between the communities, but no one will admit even a hint of optimism.

Zevulun Hammer, education minister under Binyamin Netanyahu, claimed yesterday that the right-wing was being unfairly blamed: "Bullets don't fly from only right to left." But within Israeli society the hatred and the violence has been one way — and it was often condoned by associates of Mr Netanyahu before Mr Rabin was killed. It is true that the assassination did not create the schism: it only turned the spotlight upon it. It is also true (though it does not help) that the fundamentalist objection to the peace process is based not on anti-Arab prejudice but on profound conviction. This is the essence of the argument over Hebron today. To

the Palestinians (and to Mr Rabin's government which negotiated the Oslo agreement), Hebron was an Arab town with a small Jewish community; to religious Zionism, it was and is the City of the Patriarchs.

An Israeli prime minister can only begin to reconcile such deep divisions in society by leading it forwards, not backwards. Shimon Peres sought to do so after Mr Rabin's death against increasing odds. In February he made his own task harder by consenting to the Israeli assassination in Gaza of the Hamas bomb-maker known as "the engineer". This then triggered the massive bombings against Israeli civilian targets which lost him the election. But it should be remembered that such assassinations have always been a tool of state policy. It was a year ago tomorrow (by our calendar) that the Islamic Jihad leader Fathi Shigraqi was gunned down in Malta. Now Israel is bracing itself for reprisals — and West Bank Palestinians suffer further hardship with a new total closure.

Mr Netanyahu says he "sees things differently" from the Oslo agreement, yet he is not a fundamentalist but a pragmatist — with a strong opportunistic streak. The tragedy is that this has so far led him in the wrong direction. It was always going to be hard for Israeli society to face up to the implications of making peace with the Palestinians. For the logic (which Mr Peres accepted privately but could never say in public) does lead towards two separate states. When this is pointed out by outsiders — as President Chirac did this week — it causes enormous resentment. Yet a new, equal and co-operative relationship is the only real solution to Jewish-Arab hostility. Mr Arafat only pays lip service to it; some of his colleagues and many ordinary Palestinians even today would genuinely like to make it work.

Mr Netanyahu and, it must be acknowledged, very large numbers of Israelis, reject a two-state solution altogether. But the last year has demonstrated that he and they have no other alternative except a gradual slide into the abyss (taking Mr Arafat, as he concedes more ground to keep in the negotiating process) with them. Contemplating this abyss could and should lead to second thoughts on entirely practical grounds. A right-winger leader is better placed than a prime minister of the left to change course (it has been done elsewhere). Mr Netanyahu might even find it easier than he expected: it is certainly the only way to bring to an end the endless circle of revenge — and defeat Mr Rabin's assassin.

One committee: two Hamiltons

Sir Archie to be the judge of Neil. Surely some mistake?

WHEN Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith did the honourable thing and stepped down from the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee one vaguely expected him to be replaced by Caesar's wife. Instead, he is being replaced by Sir Archie Hamilton. This shows a curious approach to proving to a sceptical country that the House of Commons is serious about the business of self-regulation.

The Standards and Privileges Committee sits, in effect, as a court. It is the practice in most courts that any judge or jurymen who might be considered part pris in a case will disqualify himself. What about Sir Archie? He will be required to sit in judgment on Neil Hamilton. In a radio interview last year he made his feelings about his namesake quite plain. He said he regretted he had resigned, adding: "What we're coming under is a tremendous amount of slur and innuendo being used by partisan members of the media to try and get rid of ministers. And somebody has to stand up and fight this." For good measure, he went on to advocate

"a number of bits of legislation to restrict freedom of the press . . . it is going to be necessary because we cannot go on having politicians being picked on in this way, nor indeed our institutions undermined." Would any judge in any other court in the land allow someone onto a jury who had made plain his feelings in such a way?

Sir Archie is, in other words, a strange nominee for the post-Nolan age. He opposed the Nolan reforms forcing MPs to declare their salaries from consultancies and directorships. Despite this opposition, he lodged letters with the House in May which showed that he was being paid by private firms specifically to approach ministers on their behalf about possible government contracts as well as to attempt to influence policy and to book Commons dining rooms for corporate entertainment. They appeared to come close to "paid advocacy," an activity which is truly forbidden. If the Government is truly intent on proving that self-regulation will work, Sir Archie's appointment is a funny way of showing it.

Supping in the lost chance saloon

Reduce drink and driving then watch the feelgood factor

THE GOVERNMENT should swiftly implement yesterday's recommendation from the chief police officers for a fresh squeeze on drinking and driving. They want the present limit of 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood (the ceiling above which drink-related accidents start to escalate) to be reduced to 50mg. A pint of beer or two glasses of wine is about 80mg though it varies considerably depending on the strength of the beer and the metabolism of the person involved. The Department of Transport's official policy is that people shouldn't drink at all. But the Government is reluctant to impose lower limits through the law, despite the evidence that earlier constraints helped to reduce the number of

people killed in accidents involving illegal alcohol levels from 1,040 in 1985 to only 580 by 1995. The lower the limit, the more those who persist in drinking and driving will make themselves conspicuous.

There isn't much chance of getting legislation through Parliament during this session because the Government is desperate to avoid anything even remotely controversial.

Alas, any proposal to curb drinking and driving is likely to be judged more by whether it will win or lose votes in the election than on whether it will reduce accidents. This is crazy. If reducing road accidents doesn't boost the feelgood factor then nothing deserves to.



Letters to the Editor

Children of the dream

AS A young student, I find the whole move to a civic manifesto patronising (Moral crusade gathers pace, October 22). We are not going to get rid of violence or anger by young people by making us adhere to more meaningless values and ideas. We need to ask Frances Lawrence what her agenda really is. What is she really trying to achieve — a more open, pacifist society or one that fits in with her ideology and beliefs? We aren't going to achieve this by her manifesto.

Samuel Fortier, Flat 5, Hermit's Croft, Edinburgh EH8 9RG.

THEORETICAL form in the airties and the world came to study how we did it. However, the network of companies was all but destroyed in the eighties and nineties by government cuts to the arts and by the containment of local authorities to providing only the most basic services. Philip Hedley, Artistic Director, Theatre Royal Stratford East, Gerry Raffles Square, London E15 1BN.

YOUR interviews with young people who have never participated in citizenship learning (How the class of '96 switched off at moralistic lectures and double talk, October 23) underline the importance of involving young people in studying citizenship, not lecturing them about it. Where schools work with their pupils on citizenship the story is very different. For example, last year CSV launched a national award for school pupils taking part in citizenship education — Passport for Life. At one school, a group of pupils met their local football team to discuss problems surrounding football violence, presenting their solutions to school assembly. At another, young people reduced the amount of litter being dropped locally after doing market research among pupils and coming up with solutions to the problem. Participative citizenship education works where young people identify and implement positive responses to community needs. Sadly, no

teacher-training institution prepares its students to teach citizenship experientially. Elisabeth Hoodless, Executive Director, Community Service Volunteers, 227 Pentonville Road, London N1 9NU.

THERE is now a danger that young people will finish up as scapegoats for failings in a system that, in some areas, has excluded up to 10 per cent of them from formal education and condoned the fact that almost 30 per cent have little to show for 10 years' compulsory schooling. Before rushing to quick-fix solutions, politicians should support existing schemes based on quality youth work, such as the Youth Achievement Awards developed by Youth Clubs UK, that can provide real evidence of success. John Bateman, Chief Executive, Youth Clubs UK, 11 St Bride Street, London EC4A 4AS.

WHAT a wonderful opportunity at Halifax for the Government to put its educational philosophy into practice. Poor schools should be closed and good schools allowed to expand. So why not close the (poor) Ridings school and send the pupils to the two (good) nearby, grant-maintained schools so that they can expand? A Osbaldiston, Kinder, Pinkham Lane, Cleobury Mortimer, Worcs DY14 8QF.

Your Majesty, about that speech you were supposed to have given

THE Queen's Speech has disappointed many charities who care for some of Britain's most vulnerable people by one significant omission — the proposals concerning employers' access to police records.

The proposals, set out in green and white papers, were at an advanced stage. Some measure of urgently needed protection from abuse would be given to children and adults, by alerting employers to previous convictions of potential employees.

The proposed legislation was imperfect. It failed to offer the same protection to vulnerable adults as it did to children. My organisation works with many vulnerable adults, people who are both deaf and blind, and often with little or no formal communication. And, appalling as it may seem, potential abusers are attracted to working with such vulnerable adults. We were, however, optimistic about persuading the Home Office minister, David Maclean MP, to make a small change to the proposals to extend protection to vulnerable adults.

By the irony of timing, while the Queen was speaking, the report of a commission into child abuse, chaired by Lord Williams of Mostyn, was released. Even in politics, actions speak louder than words. Many words have been uttered by ministers on protecting vulnerable people from abuse. The realpolitik of the final months of government look like revealing them as rhetoric.

David Barker, Managing Director, Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association, 11-13 Clifton Terrace, London N4 3SP.

AS A solicitor specialising in family law, I am most disappointed that the Queen's Speech contained no proposals to change the law relating to the rights of unmarried cohabitants. This is an area of crucial importance to a huge number of people but the law, at present offering little certainty or security for many of the individuals concerned, is in urgent need of reform. The law in this area is quite frankly a mess. Norman Lattimer, Bohman & Lewis Solicitors, 98 Turmill Street, London EC1M 5QU.

ONE of the reasons given by the Government for changes to its proposed programme of legislation is "lack of parliamentary time". Evidently, the man who determined that Parliament should take the three-and-a-half month recess that is just ending? Peter Cullen, 29 Lower Stanton St Quintin, Nr Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 6DB.

YOU claim that "one of the better suggestions for reform came, surprisingly, not from Labour, but from John Major" (Gone fishing for votes, October 23), referring to the Prime Minister's June speech on aspects of parliamentary reform. Evidently, the man who determined that Parliament should take the three-and-a-half month recess that is just ending? Peter Cullen, 29 Lower Stanton St Quintin, Nr Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 6DB.

We may edit letters: shorter ones are more likely to appear. We regret we cannot acknowledge those not used.

Open and shut

GLENDIA Jackson says that rail privatisation is turning inquiries (of serious railway incidents) into back-passing exercises rather than a sober attempt to uncover the truth (Legal moves by victims of rail crash, October 23).

Privatisation has made no such difference. The Health and Safety Executive is fully independent and, as such, entirely free to make up its own mind about the cause of railway incidents, based on the facts. The HSE is currently carrying out its independent investigation into the Watford crash and will publish a special report. I concur with Miss Jackson that it is clearly in the public interest that the HSE findings are made as widely available as possible, and they will be. Those findings will be relevant to the claims of those who have suffered injury or loss. Again, that is no different to what applied prior to privatisation. The difference now is that rather than claim against the single BR Board, third parties may claim against the single claims-handling agency, Railway Claims Limited. Sir George Young, Secretary of State for Transport, 76 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DR.

IF Tony Newton persists in efforts to exclude the broadcasters from hearings of David Willetts's evidence, he will break the rules of procedure agreed by the House (Conservatives aim to blame broadcast of Willetts affair, October 24). As the BBC editor involved in detailed negotiations with his predecessors ahead of the TV experiment, I can say that there was unanimity that a public hearing meant just that. Open to all. Efforts to allow the press in while excluding the broadcasters were firmly squashed. This was enshrined in the report approved by the House. I am sure that the Supervisor of Broadcasting is making this quite clear to Mr Newton. Mike Broadbent, 1 Whitehill Avenue, Luton, Beds.



A word for the moneylenders

HUGO YOUNG (Commentary, October 22) says that "A rich Christian country would not tolerate the giving of less than 0.5 per cent of national income to the poor of the Third World", thus implicitly criticising Britain. Yet we are not a Christian country; we are a post-Christian country whose morality and whose systems have been affected by a Judeo-Christian heritage.

Even if we were a Christian country we would not necessarily delegate our charitable giving to the state. We might believe that Third World aid was a tax on the poor of the first world to benefit the rich of the Third World. I believe Christ preached individual salvation through faith and good works not a collectivist salvation via the Inland Revenue and the Foreign Office. Gerald Hartup, Director, The Freedom Association, 35 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JB.

IT is not relevant how Christian a policy or politician is or appears to be. The fact that Enoch Powell, Ian Paisley, Myra Hindley and Tony Blair all claim Christian belief is not a matter of universal reassurance. Let's leave Christianity to those who choose it for themselves, and not take it as a measure of good morals or good politics. John Webster, Manchester.

HUGO YOUNG's assertion about aid-giving and a rich Christian country is right — but are we really to believe that this defines the

full extent to which Britain and other Western nations violate Christian values? The recent activities of BP in Columbia, of Shell in Nigeria, and of British Agribusiness in Indonesia, are only the latest examples of the long-standing British and US determination to prevent local people interfering with (or, God forbid, controlling) local resources and so threatening profits and power. Our real moral failure is not doing too little but doing far too much. David Edwards, 41 Sutton Road, Charnminster, Bournemouth BH9 1RW.

PHILIP Hensher claims in his article on cycling (Society, October 23): "You're not likely to be seriously endangered by anybody on two wheels." Really? After several months in-line skating to work, I've had several near misses with cyclists who blithely ignore traffic lights. Conversely I've met nothing but courtesy from motorists. Joanna Pegum, 6/32 Lower Sloane Street, London SW1W 8BP.

Final thoughts

I AM quite sure that K P Byfield's life (Letters, October 23), despite his age, is of equal value to that of Harold Pinter. More to the point, I am sure that Harold Pinter would agree, though he might regret that Mr Byfield had failed to understand a major aspect of his writings. Colin Beutman, 84 Archway Road, London N19 3TT.

Sentencing the victim

WRITE about the case of the two women jailed for refusing to give evidence against an alleged attacker (Contempt for the truth, October 24).

I was attacked in November 1995 in my own drive. I have just been told the first court hearing has been cancelled. In the interim, I have attended an identification parade at which I was told this was my chance to "get my own back", and received information about the alleged criminals which was not reassuring: received a very impersonal letter telling me I would be needed as a witness "some time in the future"; had to in-

form a clerk of the court of my availability over the next six months in case there is a trial; and received 10 days' notice of a trial which was subsequently cancelled.

In the past 12 months, I have had recurrent thoughts about recommitment if I give evidence; changing my appearance at court so I couldn't be traced afterwards; not giving evidence. I am 6ft 4in tall, male and severely traumatised by the attack and the subsequent handling of the affair. It is not surprising that these women came to the decision they did. Name and address supplied.

A Country Diary

ROSELAND, CORNWALL: A flight of 14 corzonas flew in line-ahead formation, low across the waters of Gerrans Bay. They are creatures of an almost prehistoric design and, when alighting with their wings hung out to dry, seem like the birds of another age. An oyster-catcher rose from the rocks with a piercing call and two curlews flew westwards to a rockpool with their liquid chattering song hanging in the mild air.

You can always have a high expectation on this coast of hearing the call of the curlew, the most dramatic of our native birdsong, so long as you know the time of the tide. As the incoming waters cover the rich estuarial mudflats of this sunken coast, so the curlew population comes up to the grassland pastures. A field behind temporary diggings we once had at Ruan Highlanes was a dependable sighting point from which I observed the regular rhythms of curlew life, and also developed a good-enough imitation whistled call to get the birds responding. We walked a

four-mile stretch of the coastal path to return to Portscatho. Ahead of us lay Nave Head, with Gull Rock offshore and the bulk of Dodman Head beyond. A southerly airstream under low cloud maintained very mild conditions but I was reminded that, when the cloud breaks and provides the sunshine of an Indian summer, the sea is still warm enough for a dip.

On this coast, in earlier years, we have swum as late as the end of October but, on this visit, the low cloud heralded the arrival of an Atlantic depression carrying large amounts of rain. A swim did not therefore appeal. As we approached Portscatho, now battering down for the winter, I remembered days of summer sun here with the house martins speeding in to feed their young beneath the eaves and the occasional appearance of the seals in the harbour waters at evening time. A long, grey winter precedes the return of the pleasures of the summer sun. COLIN LUCKHURST

Handwritten signature: JPH 20/10/96

Diary
Matthew Norman

I AM captivated by an interview with Uri Geller in *Teddy Bear Times*, a bi-monthly for fans of the stuffed creatures. Mr Geller, we are told, "has turned his attention to the mysterious healing properties of teddy bears," and he himself reveals how he first discovered these properties. "Some three years ago, I received a letter from US Vice President Al Gore," says Mr Geller. Mr Gore, he goes on, had seen him on TV, and wrote to him asking for help in recovering the body of his son, Al Junior, from an accident. At once, Mr Geller went into his own son's bedroom, and with permission to borrow his teddy bear, he took the bear and released into it all the energy and power I could, he continues. "We sent a courier with the bear to the States. It was not long before Al was in touch, telling me how my son's bear helped his recuperation." The White House promises to investigate the truth of this claim, while Mr Geller is out of contact in Greece. I don't want to be alarmist, but if the bear is the truth in Mr Geller's hands (and you couldn't make it up, could you?), perhaps we should all put our minds to the phrase "one heartbeat from the Presidency".

FOR the first time since Monty Montgomery tried to stop us mentioning his separation on grounds of "invading his privacy", we are contacted by the Mirror Group legal department. Its head, Charles Collier Wright, wishes to correct a report about Brendan Woolhead, the victim of the Aldwych bus bomb wrongly assumed by many newspapers to be a member of the IRA. The Mirror did not pay Mr Woolhead a six-figure sum, he points out, and had not settled the action at all when death ended his suit for libel. "Look, I'm not too worried, to be honest," says Mr Collier Wright. "But you did say we paid more than the Sun..."

ADMIRERS of the news judgment of GMTV, home for a little while longer of that Barbara Walters manqué, Anthea Turner, will be relieved to hear that it is in no way losing its touch. Yesterday, the programme's presenter was giving his traditional post-Queen's Speech interviews to the morning broadcasters, and the BBC's *Breakfast News*, the *Today programme* and GMTV were scheduled to speak to him in Downing Street. At the last minute, however, GMTV rang the BBC to say that it would not, after all, be sharing facilities since something more pressing had occurred. Something more pressing in this instance was an "exclusive" interview with the pop duo, Robson and Jerome.

OVABLY aggressive literary agent Andrew Wylie, the man known to some as Martin Amis's tooth fairy, may have met his match. The *New York Daily News* reports that on Monday Andrew received a present at his office: a 13-inch cactus with inch-and-a-half-long quills. Andrew, it seems, is up to his old poaching tricks again, and the plant's sender, rival agent Liz Ziemska, was furious at his attempt to steal British writer Tibor Fischer. "It was the ugliest thing I've ever seen," says Ms Ziemska, who has never visited Michael Winner in his boudoir. She reports that Andrew was conscious enough to call with his thanks, telling her: "The cactus was a little dusty when I took it out of the box. So I licked it clean."

FURTHER evidence arrives of rising cerebral standards among the nation's uniformed officers. In Strathclyde, PC Jim McAnley was approached by an anxious local worried about a dog trapped inside an electronic advertising board in a bus station. On investigating, reports Police magazine, the constable did indeed hear the yelping of a puppy, and it was only when PC McAnley was on the point of kicking out a panel to free the animal that the shopkeeper raced over to claim responsibility. "What about the wee dog?" the officer asked. "That's nae dog," said the shopkeeper. "That's a sound effect for a video of 101 Dalmatians."



A double-barrelled assassination

Commentary
Peter Preston

THE real ticket to watch 10 days hence isn't Clinton/Gore or Dole/Kemp. No such terse euphony, alas. The ticket I'll be watching as the results come in fires on all double barrels. Evans-Pritchard/Rees-Mogg. Either they'll win big, or the shades of derision will finally gather.

Ambrose Evans-Pritchard is Washington correspondent of the *Sunday Telegraph*. Lord Rees-Mogg is Lord Rees-Mogg. Together, over the past four years, they've been *de facto* world chairpersons of the Bill Clinton Non-Fan Club. And they matter more than a string of articles on Sunday or columns in the *Times* would initially indicate. Ambrose has been deeper into the alleged per-

fidy of Clinton's Arkansas than any journalist working for a mainstream newspaper anywhere — his presidential revelations echoing back across the Atlantic and into American consciousness. ("People in Europe probably have a clearer picture of the real man," he once wrote.) And William Rees-Mogg has decked those diggings in the ermine of respectability. To thumb back through their assembled writings is to inhabit a universe where "accusations of fraud, corruption in political fundraising, tax offences, police cover-ups and the abuse of power," not to mention "obsessive sexual misdemeanour," are always (according to Mogg) about to bring the President down. "As the momentum [this in May 1994] builds, it seems unlikely that Clinton can be renominated, let alone re-elected; he is not even certain to reach the end of his term unindicted."

Ambrose in full flow can make such creamy assertions low fat. Try November 1994. "Clintonism is the last gasp of a defunct ideology, and this administration is a fleet-

ing interlude in a relentless shift to the hard right." The headline declares: "Clinton is doomed." His presidency has been "reduced to levels not seen since the era of congressional hegemony in the late 19th century." A primary challenge to him from the left "was inevitable". Evans-Pritchard gleefully quoted one of New Gingrich's key advisers: "We're going for the jugular. It'll be a scandal a week for the next two years."

Rees-Mogg, meanwhile, was also working the economic front. Clinton's prospects in 1993 were already threatened by the problems he inherited from George Bush: "The American recovery remains weak and suspect." There was no chance of cutting the deficit. But last month, if you please, that same economy was "still fine and in prolonged recovery from the last months of the Bush administration".

Now we are about to find out what the American voters think, and a few of the old alibis are trotting out. The biggest, ceaselessly repeated, seems to dabble in paranoia. President Bill gets away with it (E-P) because of the indifference of "the supposed cognoscenti in the lawyer-liberal ghetto of Washington DC"; or (R-M) of "respectable journalists of liberal views living comfortably in New York". Why won't they listen to us? And why (second alibi) have the Republicans chosen this "duffy" Dole person? The headline declares: "Clinton is doomed."

ONLY two days later (if you believe in polls) the New York *Times* 20 points clear and general election support because the electorate don't like a spunky Dole dishing the dirt. Three days later, a Los Angeles *Times* California poll showed the President back in another 20-point lead, with 80 per cent job approval — and half of all voters thinking Dole much "too conservative" for them. Perhaps, on the morning of November 6, this will just be

so much psephological flotsam. Perhaps Bob Dole and added spunk will turn the trick in which case the Ambrose/Mogg ticket will be Fundis of the Millennium. But if they should, by chance, be wrong — what then? The question is not only for America. You don't have to believe that Bill Clinton is a saintly chap or Arkansas the Vatican at prayer. What you do have to ponder, though, is a style of journalism which turns reports or analysis into a thin screech of outrage, which makes some of the facts into all of the facts. There is more to US political life than the tiny world of talk-radio stations (run by Oliver North) and little magazines. November's vote is, in his way, a referendum on that world. We shall see. We shall see what ordinary people, not narrow ideologues, actually care about.

Lord Rees-Mogg, it is true, can manage perfectly well without any more Clinton columns. He already has the spectral fire of Euro-Federalism blazing on his hearth. May be Ambrose will re-surface as a Brussels correspondent. But here is the wider dimension, where issues and attitudes interlock. On my bookshelf I have the recent edition of *Green University's* political quarterly in which John Redwood talks gushingly about the inspiration that is New Gingrich. Come autumn, those leaves have fallen. Come autumn, the punters have a view. Certainly — on Newt or Bill or Helmut or Jacques — isn't a premium product. Certainly can be a kick in the pants, waiting to happen.

Alan Travis argues that Michael Howard's plan to toughen sentences is based on false premises. So does the Home Secretary have a secret — and ugly — motivation?

Crimes of punishment

MICHAEL Howard will today finally unveil details of the American-style mandatory minimum sentences he wants to introduce to the British criminal-justice system for the first time.

He says he is doing it because the public needs greater protection from dangerous and persistent criminals. Yet the simple assumption underlying this package is that the judges have gone soft. Soft, that is, on convicted rapists who rape again, soft on convicted hard-drug dealers who get caught a third time, and soft on career houseburglars up for the third or more time.

The minimum sentences he is touting the judges they must pass, with only a very narrow escape clause, are not quite what they seem. Take the three-years minimum for a third-time burglar. This is not three years as we understand

it now, is out in 18 months with good behaviour. It is in fact the equal of a current six-year sentence, because he is also going to abolish automatic 50 per cent parole.

For that kind of harshness to be necessary there must be something deeply wrong with our judges. Where is the evidence? Mr Howard will publish some figures today in which he suggests that the

referred only six of them. No wonder the last Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor, calls his evidence "flimsy and dubious".

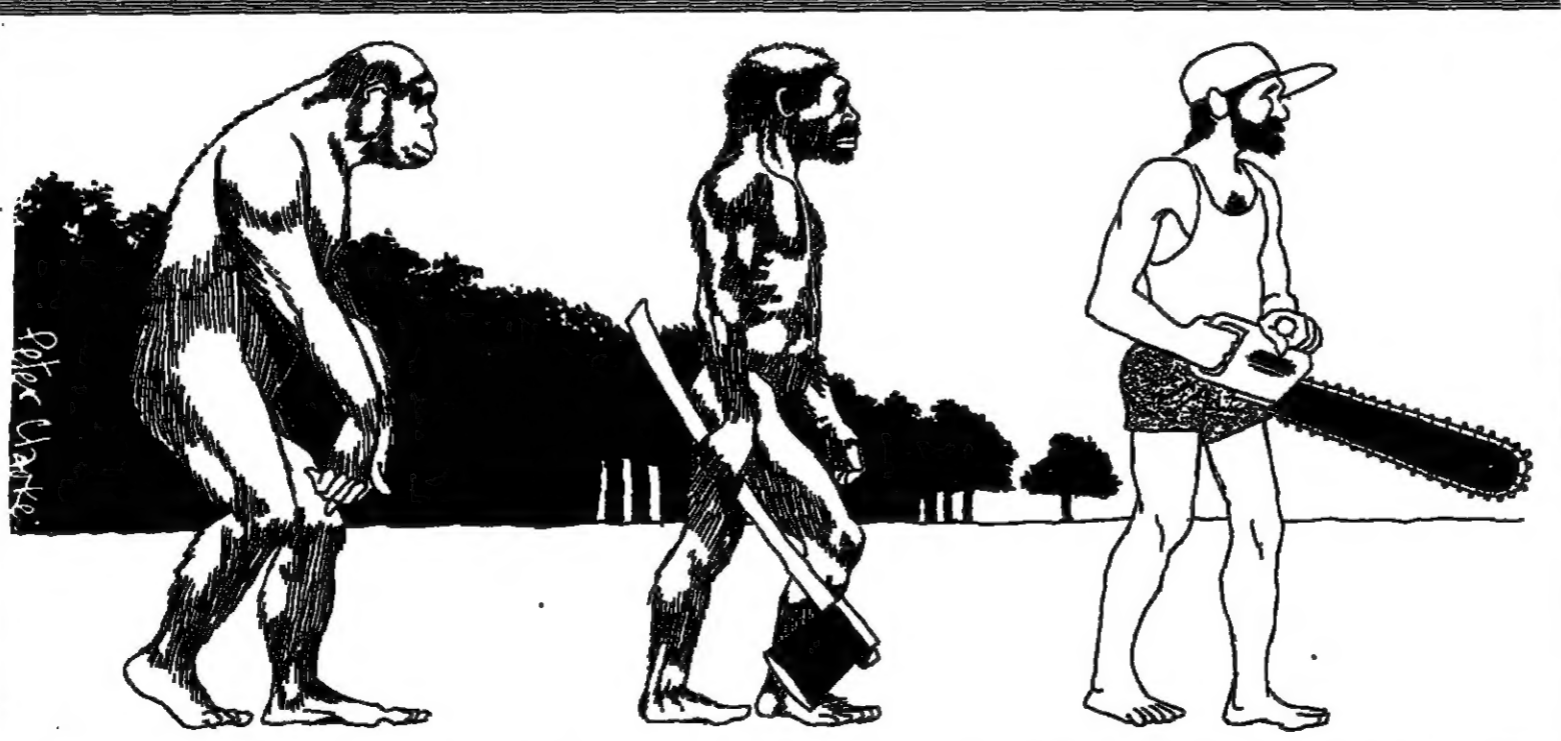
So there must be another explanation. Could it be that the public has a definite taste for punishment, believing that the judges are soft, and that Mr Howard has become the first Home Secretary for 30 years to decide to feed that

used. Prof Hough found, for example, that half the public thinks that only 50 per cent of rapists are sent to prison — in fact the judges actually send down 91 per cent of rapists. It believes that burglars and street robbers get away with fines or even cautions: in fact more than half of convicted muggers go straight to prison. The fault may lie with the media. We are only interested

in the grotesquely lenient or the extremely harsh sentences as they make news. But, as Prof Hough points out, you can't even find out what the going rate is for a 25-year-old housebreaker with previous convictions without asking the Home Office to do a special computer run.

Some of Mr Howard's "honesty in sentencing" proposals today will make sentences more transparent to the public. But the courts, which seem to live in an 18th-century world when it comes to communications, could do something. It's not necessary to abolish parole to do it. If the public is horrified when somebody sentenced to 10 years walks out after only five, why not have the judge pass a sentence of five-to-10 years as they do in America?

I am sure that Mr Howard would like to put the public straight — as revealed in the latest British Crime Survey — that most people think that crime has not only gone up, but gone up a lot, since he began the job of Home Secretary three years ago. Why not tell them the truth about the judges too? Instead he stands there shouting: "Do not adjust your set, there is a fault in reality."



The enemy in the forest

History, when you think about it, comes down to a continual battle between men and trees, argues Martin Kettle

TREES are like motherhood, apple pie and, more topically, family values. Nobody has a bad word to say about any one of them. So the news that the Countryside Commission intends to plant billions of new trees and to double the amount of woodland in England is sure to have caused warm glows all round, and hardly a shiver of complaint anywhere.

Forests are great news for trees. But are trees quite as indiscriminately good for humans as we now seem to assume? At the end of the 20th century human beings feel guilty about trees. It was not always thus. Indeed, there is a case for saying that the history of the planet can be crudely expressed in terms of a struggle between them and us — with us winning. Be-

fore the humans came, there were trees. Left to themselves, trees dominated, forcing out other forms of vegetation and defining the conditions under which other forms of vegetable and animal life could exist. Only water, rock and extremes of temperature can permanently defy them. Apart, that is, from human beings.

Humans are rightly in awe of trees. In *Genesis* and in other religious writings they are symbols of life and the knowledge of good and evil. Yet it is also undeniable that a very large amount of human social and economic progress is based on the uprooting of trees. Civilisation, one might say, advances as woodlands are cleared.

THE coal industry on which Britain's industrial wealth was based only developed once the forests which covered the coal deposits were removed. The disappearance of the forests was a precondition for more modern civilisations too, and ultimately for the establishment of what nowadays would be called a more cohesive society.

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John Bauldie, who was killed, aged 47, in the helicopter crash along with Matthew Harding and three other men...

quest With his inimitable blend of scholarship and devotion, he elevated the often narrow world of fanzines to a different realm...

Bob Dylan Book. He had recently begun a new job, as a sub-editor on the magazine House & Garden...

Eric Malpass

A literary fame in translation

The writer Eric Malpass, who has died aged 85, was an example of England neglected...

Eric published five more novels with Gaylord as the central figure; a trilogy about Shakespeare, and a novel on Thomas Cranmer...

Eric Halsall

World of sheepdogs



Eric Halsall... a natural broadcaster at home in the country

Eric Halsall, who has died aged 76, was the voice of the television series One Man and His Dog from its birth in 1976...

was an initial suspicion and resistance, but Eric and the then society secretary, Lance Alderson, could see the potential for bringing both the essential work of the dog and the skill and competition of the trials field to a much wider audience...

knowledge was unrivalled. He wrote seven books, all of which brought out his love of sheepdogs and the countryside...

Jackdaw

disadvantage is that you do have to worry about shotgun pellets in the meat... HOW to Catch a Possum: Since all the recipes here involve possum, I figured it might be worth it to include a section on how to get your hands on one...

it unless the bowl is cherry. If someone rolls a nice joint, it's good to give the person a compliment on his rolling skills...

High pedaller SWISS inventor Daniel Stocker is patenting a bicycle with a difference - it travels vertically up a track as the rider pedals away...

Violent volcanoes NS... vertical cycling

Chat-burglar ● JEFF? Oh, I'm sorry, you look just like a friend of mine... ● We seem to be going the same direction. Would you like to share a cab?

Death Notices KILLY, Alexander, pianist and teacher, suddenly, on 22nd October 1986, aged 67...

In Memoriam DAZZLE, Kenneth, died 23 October 1986. Always loved - always missed. And only seen an hour - done

Emily Sheffield

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Halifax reverse takeover ploy set to lift flotation share price

Teresa Hunter

NINE MILLION savers and borrowers will receive about £800 worth of free shares next June when the Halifax launches the biggest ever UK stock market flotation at £10 billion. But Britain's home loan giant yesterday surprised the City by announcing its route to conversion will involve a complicated reverse takeover, rather than a simple share issue. This will lift demand for the shares — pushing up the price even higher — because it leaves the society vulnerable to takeover immediately after the sell-off. It also requires a higher proportion of savers to support the plan for the sale to proceed. Normally, building societies which convert to banks

are protected from takeover for five years. But Halifax chiefs insist the bank will be able to survive without legislative ring-fencing. The Halifax's £10 billion conversion to a bank will come in the middle of a year in which consumers will share a massive £24 billion following the sale of seven mutual building societies and insurance companies. The Alliance & Leicester plans to become a bank in April, the Woolwich in July, and Northern Rock in October. Bristol & West will be taken over by the Bank of Ireland in July. And two mutual insurance companies, Norwich Union and Colonial Mutual, also plan flotations before the end of next year. Over the next few weeks, Halifax members will be advised to top up their accounts to their level on the quality-



ing date of November 26 1994 to qualify for a maximum allocation of free shares. They will be told how many shares they will receive in the society's transfer document, which will be dispatched with

voting forms in February. The document will also give an indication of the price at which shares will begin trading so members will know how much they will benefit from a yes vote. The society's decision to back into a subsidiary means that half its nine million investing members must now approve the sale for it to proceed. With a simple flotation, only 20 per cent of investing members are required to vote. The reverse takeover allows the society to free up capital needed to expand the business by side-stepping provisions of the 1986 Building Societies Act giving special rights to shareholders who were former society members if the new bank goes bust. Halifax director David Gilchrist said: "What is called the Priority Liquidation Distribution Right affects our

solvency ratio and constrains our use of capital for some years." However, by opting to transfer its business to a subsidiary the Halifax will forego the five years' protection from takeover provided by the Act. Chief executive Mike Blackburn said: "We believe such restrictions are neither necessary nor appropriate and that the Halifax should stand on equal terms with the other top 25 companies listed on the stock market." The final vote will be counted at a special general meeting to be held in late February in Sheffield. The Halifax will provide its members with a free postal share-dealing service in the aftermath of the flotation. Mr Gilchrist said: "We will take steps to ensure supply matches demand and shares trade in an orderly fashion in the days after the float."

Notebook

VAT ruling hits the public twice



Edited by Mark Milner

YESTERDAY'S European Court of Justice ruling against HM Customs and Excise could cost up to £200 million in VAT repayments, provided those companies affected by the decision have kept 23 years' worth of records. The cost of the court's decision — that the Government was wrong to charge VAT on the full price of goods rather than the money actually received after allowing for discounts or cash-back deals — falls to £70 million if Parliament continues a three-year cap on the period for which refunds can be claimed. It is not surprising that the Government should want to ascertain (and limit) the extent of its liabilities. Current VAT challenges in the unlikely event of the Revenue losing them all — would lead to claims running into billions of pounds. Even on a more realistic basis the public purse is likely to suffer fairly heavily. It could be argued that taxpayers will suffer a double penalty. The money which has to be refunded will have to be raised from other taxes. Yet it is unlikely that all the money handed back by the tax authorities will find its way to those who originally paid it, that is those who actually bought the goods on which VAT was levied incorrectly. But limiting the period for which wrongly charged VAT repayments can be claimed to three years would be unfair, all the more so in that the new rules are already in force, awaiting Parliament's rubber stamp. It is true that there is a limit to the period for which the Customs and Excise can demand unpaid VAT — but that is six years, unless fraud is involved, twice the proposed limit on repayment periods. Surely there is a case here for equal treatment. If Customs and Excise believes six years is the appropriate period for which honestly unpaid VAT can be collected, the limit for those seeking restitution should be similar. If the tax authorities continue on their present course they are certain to find themselves facing further legal battles which will mean further bills for the taxpayer.

ket. So, what are the prospects for its substantial overseas operations, not least its global network and its 58 per cent stake in Hongkong Telecom? Telecom industry experts forecast that in the near future there will be just three global carriers — AT&T, British Telecom and the Deutsche Telekom/France Telecom/Sprint alliance each intending to succeed. But the analysts say that one of the select group will probably be a Far Eastern, rather than American or European, operation. C&W is realistic enough to know that it is unlikely to make the top three on its own — although it is already established in the Far East. That after all was why British Telecom was keen to acquire it earlier this year. C&W seems most likely to seek an alliance with NTT, the Japanese domestic phone group anxious to break into the international market when the local regulatory authority allows. NTT, the world's largest telecoms group, has plenty of money and a huge home market, while C&W feels it has plenty to bring to the party. However, other big telephone companies, including BT, are already beating a path to NTT's door. The danger is that C&W will miss the opportunity as it concentrates management effort on making a success of its enlarged British operation.

Philips' frisson

PHILIPS chairman Cor Boonstra was simultaneously apologetic and robust as he delivered the company's third quarter results yesterday. Though it might sound difficult to be both at the same time, it was also necessary. Philips' past is not exactly free of unpleasant surprises for shareholders, and yesterday Mr Boonstra had to deliver another in the form of a worse-than-expected profits slump. Delivering such news required serving out a dollop of reassurance that he was prepared to do something about it and Mr Boonstra obliged in no uncertain terms. It is easy for Mr Boonstra to promise a root-and-branch approach to reform; he is a relative newcomer to Philips, joining from Sara Lee in 1994 and stepping up to the top job only this month. While Mr Boonstra's tough talk may have helped to ease the stock market's concerns about the profits decline, it will have sent more than a frisson of concern through the company's workforce. Mr Boonstra was clear; anything that cannot be turned round will be closed or sold. There are hints, too, that the company will be looking to shift more of its production to lower cost locations. Philips has already said it will take a one billion guilder (370 million) charge against restructuring costs next quarter. Unlocking shareholder value is likely to be paid for in job losses too.

Cab firm in £10m fare to stock market

COMPUTER Cab, London's biggest black taxi company, is heading for a stock market float that could value it at over £10 million, writes Ian King. The Licensed Taxi Drivers' Association, which owns Computer Cab, said yesterday that it was considering a listing on the Alternative Investment Market as a means of paying for a new satellite-based communication system. The association, set up in 1988 by a group of London's cab drivers in response to the growing number of minicabs, will decide whether to go ahead with the float next month after a meeting of its 5,200 members. If the issue goes ahead, the cabbies will not receive any of the proceeds, as the money is required to finance the satellite technology now being tested in 16 taxis. According to Computer Cab, the system, in which it has invested £7.5 million, should allow a taxi to be the closest taxi within 10 seconds of receiving a telephone order. PHOTOGRAPH: GARRY WEBBER

Americans throw gauntlet at Reuters for £200m business

IAN KING
THE fight to control the £200 million business of supplying City dealers with share price information intensified yesterday when ICV, which has a 60 per cent market share, was sold to American group Primark for \$100 million (\$63 million). Primark, which owns Datastream International, also announced an agreement jointly to develop a comprehensive new information system in association with the American wire service Dow Jones Telecast. The new service, which will be available in Britain and Ireland by next summer, is expected to provide tough competition for Reuters,

which is regarded as the clear market leader in the information sector, but which lags behind ICV in the share quotation business. The deal is being paid for in a mixture of cash, shares and loan notes, and will give ICV's existing shareholders an 8 per cent stake in the enlarged Primark group. In particular, it means a windfall for ICV's chairman, Christopher Sharples, who is the former boss of the Securities and Futures Authority. Mr Sharples, whose family trusts own a 54 per cent stake in ICV, worth £34 million under the terms of the deal, will also join the main Primark board, while ICV's chief executive, David Jones, sees a £10.7 million price tag put on his 17 per cent stake. Other

ICV managers own some 10 per cent of the company. Announcing the deal, Primark's chairman, Joseph Kasputis, immediately threw down the gauntlet to Reuters, pledging that the joint venture between Primark and Dow Jones would be the best news, price quotation and information provider available. Reuters spokesman Michael Cooling said the company welcomed competition, and promised that Primark would not get an easy ride. He said: "Datastream, Teletext and ICV are already existing competitors of ours, and we shall want to see how they bring it all together. Reuters has been investing at the rate of around £200 million a year, and we shall continue to invest heavily."

Rebel directors to be forced off Emap board

HOSKYNs target for anger after summit at country hotel. Ian King reports
SIR John Hoskyns, the chairman of Emap and former adviser to Baroness Thatcher, is likely to face calls for his resignation after news last night that two rebel directors are to be forced off the publishing group's board. In a statement issued after a day-long board meeting at a country hotel in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, Emap said an extraordinary general meeting would be called shortly to remove Professor Ken Simmonds and Joe Cooke, who opposed a controversial change to Emap's articles of association during the summer. City institutions, which backed Sir John when Emap pushed through the changes, reacted furiously and indicated that they would take the matter up with the company. They said the rule change, which enabled Emap to remove directors from its board more easily in disputes, had only been backed by shareholders because Sir John had given "certain assurances" about why it was being made. One fund manager told the Guardian last night that Sir John had made clear at the annual meeting earlier this year that the rule change

would not be used to remove Prof Simmonds and Mr Cooke. He added: "I am not particularly happy at this news, and I would be surprised if many people will be. Certain assurances were given that it wasn't to get at certain people, and it would seem that impression was wrong. The corporate governance consultancy Pirc — which backed the rebels at the agm — accused Sir John of having "misled" shareholders. Anne Simpson, Pirc's joint managing director, said that Sir John had not assured institutions that the rule change was not being made to force out Prof Simmonds and Mr Cooke, he would not have received their backing. She added: "The institutions will be dismayed to find that the assurances they were provided with have been dis honoured." Sources close to Emap last night said that the company had attempted to "draw a line" under the row between the rebels and Sir John, and said the pair had been removed very reluctantly. Although Sir John and his colleagues — including chief executive Robin Miller — had sought a reconciliation with Prof Simmonds and Mr Cooke, the patience of all the other directors had finally "snapped", making yesterday's decision inevitable. Earlier, uncertainty over the row wiped some £65 million off Emap's market value, sending the shares down 32p to 712½p.

Taxpayers face paying for National Savings fraud and bungling

TERESA HUNTER
NATIONAL Savings is today accused of bureaucratic bungling, after the National Audit Office uncovered serious weaknesses in the body's accounting system. Parliament is warned that the Government's savings organisation, which safeguards investments worth nearly £10 billion, is increasingly vulnerable to fraud and errors, for which taxpayers might have to pay. Concerns arose after an audit revealed that the total of customers' balances were £2.1 million more than the apparent total of cash held in NS accounts. Auditors were also alarmed that two accounts, which should have shown a credit, were overdrawn — by £37 million and £28 million. Figures reflecting sums deposited and withdrawn over Post Office counters do not always tally. The National Audit Office will call on National Savings to put its house in order as a top priority. NAO chief Sir John Boorn said: "These weaknesses impair the agency's financial accounting systems which support the production of accounts for Parliament and make it difficult to establish precisely the total liability of the Eschequer to National Savings investors." The NAO stressed there was no evidence of similar problems in the way savers accounts were administered.

Alleged BP 'fixer' in Colombia named

JOHAN PALMER IN BRUSSELS
BRITISH Petroleum's alleged "inside man" within the Colombian government was named in the European Parliament yesterday. Ramon Marino was said by Richard Howitt, Labour MEP for Essex South, to be one of a number of former and current BP employees inside the administration "to smooth the agreement of environmental permits". Mr Howitt's claim formed part of a string of allegations, all of which are denied by BP. He told the parliament that BP was complicit in human-rights abuses and environmental

damage in Colombia. MEPs responded to Mr Howitt's claims by calling for the Colombian government to publish the human rights commission report upon which some of his allegations are based. But Anne McIntosh, Tory MEP for Essex North and Suffolk South, accused Mr Howitt of waging a campaign against one of Britain's largest employers and making "completely inaccurate allegations". The report — which BP says consists of unchecked answers to loaded questions — accuses the company of passing video footage of people protesting against oil pollution in the Casanare region to the Co-

lombian army. It alleges that a number of the protesters were then murdered or "disappeared" and gives details of seven such murders. Mr Howitt told MEPs: "I believe environmental damage is being inflicted on the people of Casanare as seriously as the evidence exposed in this parliament of Shell's action against the Ogoni people in Nigeria." "Local people told me of fish floating dead in polluted rivers and livestock blinded from grazing on poisoned fields. BP's own officials admit weekly oil spills. Illegal sites, water contamination, chemical overflows and the invasion of protected forests."

Phoning home

CABLE and Wireless's British cable coup in this week should not obscure its international ambitions. The group, after all, has always been better known overseas than in Britain and, in the broader perspective, its merger of Mercury with three leading UK cable companies merely secures its home mar-

Councils turn screw on Morgan Grenfell

SARAH WHITEBLOOM
LOCAL government treasurers — with responsibility for hundreds of millions of pounds of pension funds — are demanding answers from the troubled asset management arm of Morgan Grenfell about its security and systems in the wake of the Peter Young affair, the Guardian has learned. The withdrawal of the authorities' pension fund business would be a devastating blow to the asset management firm, which already faces losing Westminster City Council's £200 million mandate. The council's investment committee has asked other fund managers to tender for the work, although the city's chief executive Bill

Roots said yesterday Morgan Grenfell's results had been "first class". Led by Norfolk County Council, the seven English shire authorities and Scottish regional councils which have funds with Morgan Grenfell have called on the firm to complete a detailed questionnaire about its internal controls. The councils also want their auditors to carry out a site visit as part of the review. It is understood that a number of metropolitan authorities, including the London Borough of Lewisham, are planning to join the group. Morgan Grenfell admitted last night that the councils are conducting an inquiry. A spokesman said it has not yet completed the questionnaire. "We are confident that we will respond positively, he added."

TOURIST RATES — BANK SETLS

Australia 1.9595	France 7.95	July 2, 2000	Singapore 2.21
Austria 18.50	Germany 2.98	Malta 0.2505	Swaziland 7.15
Belgium 48.65	Greece 373.00	Netherlands 2.65	Spain 168.75
Canada 2.085	Hong Kong 12.05	New Zealand 2.21	Sweden 10.34
Cyprus 0.7170	India 98.83	Norway 10.06	Switzerland 1.935
Denmark 8.08	Ireland 0.9515	Portugal 269.15	Turkey 147.140
Finland 7.25	Israel 5.12	Saudi Arabia 5.98	USA 1.5525

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

Regulators need better advice, CBI insists

Celia Weston
Industrial Correspondent

PRIVATISED utility regulators should have permanent expert advisory boards but should not be merged or replaced by a single "super regulator", the Confederation of British Industry said yesterday.

The employers' group also confirmed its opposition to Labour's plans for a windfall tax on utility profits.

The CBI's intervention on regulation came the day after the Government failed to include new competition legislation in the Queen's Speech.

Recently, British Gas has engaged in a fierce campaign against price controls proposed by the gas industry watchdog, Clare Spottiswoode, while decisions by other regulators have also come under fire.

Peter Agar, CBI deputy director-general, said: "Regulation has unfortunately become rather individualised and personalised, which is why we want the advisory boards. But we don't support imposing another layer of bureaucracy."

Nor would the CBI support changes to the regulatory pricing formula that broke the connection with the Retail Price Index. "The RPI minus x percentage price cap provides strong incentives to efficiency for the utilities and brings benefits to consumers," Mr Agar said.

Advocacy of consumer interests — in the form of a trial — should also be strengthened through the cre-

ation of separate, independent bodies for each of the utilities. These should be similar to the Gas Consumers Council, which is statutory and funded by Government, Mr Agar said. Some consumer bodies were too much under the wing of regulators.

Speaking at the launch of a CBI discussion paper, "Regulating the Regulators", Mr Agar said business interests would not oppose closer working or merger of the gas and electricity watchdogs, Ofgas and Offer, if that developed.

"But the regulation of utilities needs changing by evolution rather than by pulling the whole thing up by the roots," he said.

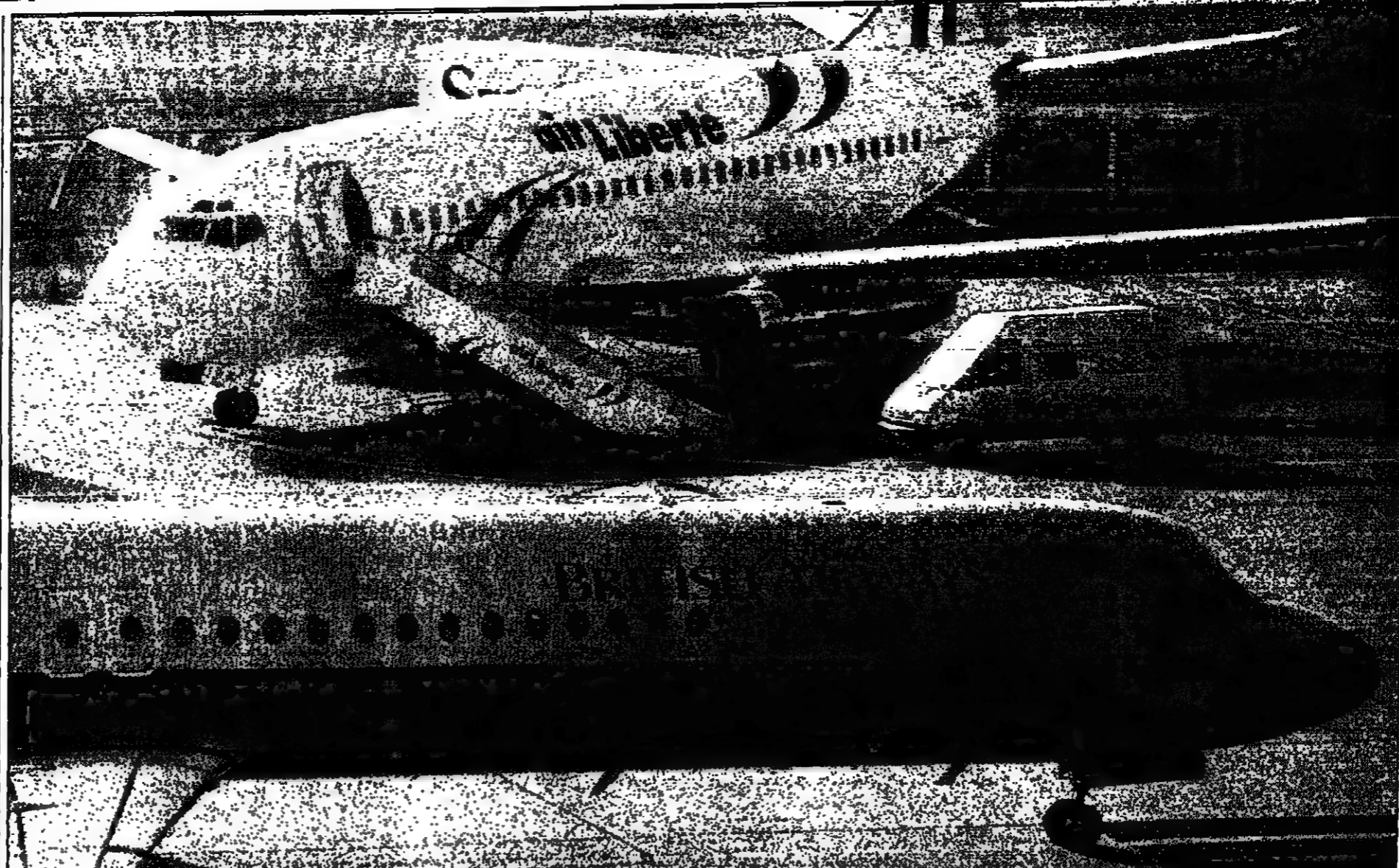
The deputy director-general said regulation could only be a surrogate for competition, and the CBI would continue to lobby for more comprehensive competition legislation after the general election.

The discussion paper, drawn up by a CBI working group, which included utility representatives, says it is necessary that decision-making by regulators be more transparent and accountability to Parliament increased.

A quick and simple system for industries to appeal against regulators' decisions should be introduced, in addition to the system allowing companies to trigger referendums in the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Explicit government guidelines on social obligations and merger control were also needed, the paper said.

The CBI hoped, however, that a windfall tax would not be introduced, which would be a bad business to impose retrospective taxation," Mr Agar said.



Airports told to cut charges by £150m

Celia Weston
Industrial Correspondent

CHARGES levied on airlines by operator BAA for the use of Gatwick, Heathrow and Stansted airports must be cut by £150 million over the next five years, the Civil Aviation Authority announced yesterday.

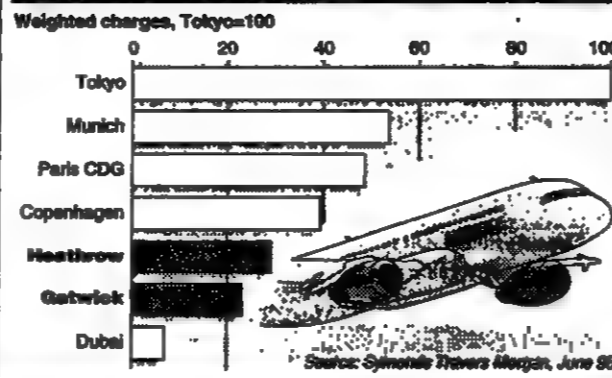
But BAA will be allowed to increase charges by 70p per passenger over two years to compensate for revenue losses if current European Union duty-free and tax-free allowances are withdrawn.

News of the price cap decision coincided with reports that the Government is to abandon plans to privatise Britain's air traffic control service this side of an election. Labour had pledged to

do everything possible to block any proposals.

The CAA also announced that it intended to publish an annual review of BAA's performance to ensure the group was carrying out the capital investment programme on which the authority's price cap decision was based.

Airport charges



Most of that expenditure — £180 million by March — will go towards Heathrow's proposed new Terminal 5.

The air industry regulator said the overall price control will require BAA to keep landing charge increases at Heathrow and Gatwick to three percentage points below inflation — the RPI-X formula. Stansted will be allowed to increase its charges by up to one percentage point above inflation each year.

The price cap, due to come into effect in April for five years, is in line with the recommendations of a Monopolies and Mergers Commission report published in July.

Russell Walls, finance director of BAA, said the price cap was challenging. If assumed the group could

achieve 4 per cent productivity savings each year and a 15 per cent reduction in construction costs over the period.

THE European Commission is expected to press for lower airport charges, *Julie Wolf writes from Brussels.* Transport commissioner Neil Kinnock said yesterday that Brussels was concerned that the airlines faced high costs, including airport charges. The costs include ground handling fees, air traffic control and airport charges, he said.

Unveiling a report on airline deregulation, Mr Kinnock said the commission would present legislative plans to ensure that airport fees are non-discriminatory, transparent and cost-effective.

THE struggle for control of bankrupt French airline Air Liberte is turning into another battle between British Airways and Richard Branson's Virgin.

Virgin Express, the regional airline, is expected to submit a bid for the French airline today.

The prize is a clutch of lucrative landing slots at Paris's Orly airport, and a foothold in Europe's largest domestic air travel market.

French court-appointed administrators will meet Air Liberte workers' council this afternoon to discuss the takeover proposals.

BA has submitted a joint bid with Banque Paribas, which would involve pumping 600 million francs (93 million) into Air Liberte.

The BA proposal has tentative union support because it will preserve 1,250 jobs for three years.

PHOTOGRAPH: REMY DE LA MALVIERE

ICI hit by dip in chemical prices

Ian King

ICI ADMITTED yesterday it had been battered by price falls in its key industrial chemicals division as it announced a collapse in third-quarter pre-tax profits to £131 million, against £248 million for the same period in 1995.

But ICI insisted that the main areas affected — polyester and titanium dioxide — were showing signs of recovery, even though prices had been sharply lower during the quarter.

Overall ICI's pre-tax profits for the first nine months of 1996 — not including one-off factors — fell from £758 million to £498 million, despite a rise in sales.

Apart from the disappointing chemicals results, which had been largely expected by the City, ICI — which before its merger with Zeneca was regarded as the bellwether of industrial health — said its other businesses were enjoying better trading.

Among these, ICI highlighted its paints division —

which includes Dulux and other decorative products — where it notched up record profits for the nine months of £127 million, due mainly to the housing recovery.

But Sir Ronnie Hampel, ICI's chairman, admitted that the disappointing performance in industrial chemicals had been the main factor in the overall results. "While there is evidence of strengthening demand in the OECD, confidence is still lacking, particularly in continental Europe. The pace of activity remains uneven and no significant change is expected before the end of the year."

In the City, analysts reacted with relief that the results had not been as bad as some forecasters had expected, and ICI shares closed 18p higher at 793½p.

Peter Blair, an analyst at Salomon Brothers said: "Their results were at the low end of expectations, but there was no surprise in the mix. Most areas are reasonably OK, but it is in industrial chemicals that they have been creamed."

Philips threatens closures to arrest profits fall

Surgery branded failure as chief takes blame, writes Nicholas Bannister

THERE was an air of *déjà vu* yesterday as Cor Boonstra, chairman of the Philips electronics group, announced steeply falling profits, a costly restructuring and job losses. His predecessor Jan Timmer, who retired this year, started his reign as chairman in equally dramatic fashion.

But yesterday's news, which followed a profits warning earlier in the month, seems all the worse

because the drastic action taken by Mr Timmer was thought to have put the Dutch electronics group back on the path of growth.

Mr Boonstra disclosed third-quarter profits down 77 per cent to 123 million guilders (£45.3 million), despite a 4.6 per cent upturn in sales, and announced a one billion guilder provision in the fourth quarter to cover wholesale restructuring.

"There are no taboos, no holy cows," he said.

The group said the downturn was mainly the result of operating losses in its consumer and professional product divisions and lower margins in components and semi-conductors.

Mr Boonstra said: "The third-quarter results are very, very disappointing to

us. We could refer to the market, or to price erosion, or to competition, but we have a different message. We, the management, are responsible."

He said the group would tackle problems more aggressively, with the aim of getting more done with fewer people.

"We will turn around, close or sell businesses that are not performing to our standards or fitting into our portfolio."

He said the group intended to restructure all its main divisions. The group has already made an 800 million guilder provision this year for restructuring its sight and sound division.

The finance director, Dudley Eustace, said: "There will be a loss of jobs

in those areas which are high-cost and a gaining of jobs in those geographical areas which offer lower-cost labour. It's a fair guess to say more jobs will be lost than gained in western Europe."

PolyGram, Philips' 75 per cent-owned music and films business, announced on Wednesday that it would be making a £56 million provision to cover a revamp of its music business.

Dutch unions expect that Philips will shed another 2,500 jobs on top of the 1,000 already announced. One official commented: "Boomstra is in a hurry."

Mr Timmer initially cut the workforce from 300,000 to 244,000 before allowing it to rise to 265,000 on the back of the then booming semi-conductor business.

News in brief

500 jobs at risk in clothier's revamp

FIVE HUNDRED jobs are at risk at William Baird — a leading supplier to Marks & Spencer and the owner of clothing brands including Windsormoor and Dannimac — after the company yesterday announced restructuring plans. The scheme involves closing three of the company's 34 UK factories over the next 18 months and moving production to the Philippines and Sri Lanka. It is planned to sell off peripheral parts of Baird's business and smaller brands such as Berketex — leaving hundreds of other workers in an uncertain position.

The shake-up, ordered by Baird's new chief executive, David Siddons, is expected to wipe out the company's 1996 profits. In the six months to the end of June, the group turned in pre-tax profit of £5.1 million, against £8.4 million in the same period last year. — Sarah Whitebloom

Price stops new jobs measure

PLANS for a new survey-based measure of unemployment have been abandoned on the grounds of cost, the Government confirmed yesterday. Despite mounting criticism of the claimant-count yardstick, the Cabinet has decided against adopting a European-style monthly survey — at an £8 million set-up cost.

The Government is to retain the quarterly Labour Force Survey, and a spokesman for the Office for National Statistics said that efforts would be made to speed up the publication of its findings. "Details on part-time working, discouraged workers (people who have given up the search for work) and the position of men and women could all be released earlier," the official said. He said no changes were expected until late 1997. — Richard Thomas

Profits rise at Deutsche Bank

DEUTSCHE, Germany's biggest bank, yesterday unveiled a 9 per cent rise in net profit in the first nine months of the year, led by commissions. Net profit rose to 1.53 billion German marks (£630 million). Operating profit, before taxes and after risk provisions and trading income, rose 25.8 per cent to 3.49 billion marks.

Both figures were below analysts' expectations. "We expect that the positive profit trend will continue into the fourth quarter," chief executive Hilmar Kopper said. — Bloomberg

Vickers workers strike

WORKERS at a factory where the Challenger tank is built are to stage a 24-hour strike today in a dispute over pay and conditions. Members of four unions at the Vickers Defence Systems factory in Leeds fear a loss of earnings under a restructuring plan.

The unions rejected a 3 per cent pay offer to accept the restructuring, but claim that the company has taken the first steps towards imposing the changes. Dick Croft, regional officer of the AEUU, said: "This should be a time for celebration in the company following the recent MoD approval for our Challenger II battle tank, but instead we're embroiled in this dispute with a management who refuses to listen to us." The company declined to comment on the dispute.

Shorts hires more

SHORT Brothers, the Northern Ireland plane-maker, said it would hire 120 workers to speed production of advanced composite materials needed to make aircraft parts at two plants near Belfast. Shorts makes airframes for Bombardier's corporate and short-haul passenger jets as well as parts for other aircraft.

Hotels flotation pulled

PRINCIPAL Hotels, the Harrogate-based group, has fallen victim to waning demand among City institutions for hotel stocks. The company's backers, led by NatWest Ventures, yesterday pulled a planned £100 million-plus flotation, which would have been this year's sixth new issue in the hotels sector.

There was speculation that the company might follow Lathro which last month pulled a float of its Metropole and Princess hotels — in seeking a trade sale. However, a source close to the company said: "The chances are we'll look to float this time next year." — Dominic Walsh

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Racing

Cigar still looking full of puff

Chris Hawkins in Toronto catches up with the super horse

CIGAR, winner of over \$4 million this year and a total of \$6.5 million in his career, runs for the 33rd and possibly last time in tomorrow's Breeders' Cup Classic in Toronto.

Image portrayed by British trainers and his approach is very much hands-on. He led Cigar out yesterday and walked him all the way from his box on one side of the Woodbine track to the paddock behind the grandstand on the other.



Dawn patrol... Cigar is led out for some early morning light exercise by trainer Bill Mott at Woodbine racetrack yesterday

After his paddock stroll, Cigar trotted and cantered the wrong way round the dirt circuit. His arrival at the stabling area caused media mayhem, and not a little upset to other lesser equine mortals who had never seen so much madness.

who, when pressed, said: "I think he'll win - he's just too good." But in racing you can never take anything for granted. When Cigar's 16-race unbeaten run finally came to an end in Del Mar in August they said he knew that he'd lost because he wouldn't eat his mince afterwards.

Story with a happy ending

DESERT Story will be daimed at next year's 2,000 Guineas after coming out on top in a desperate finish to the Vodafone Horris Hill Stakes at Newbury yesterday.

ager to owner Maktoum Al Maktoum, said: "The ground is very sticky out there and John said he had them all covered two out but when it came to the crunch he had to dig deep. He'll make up into a very nice three-year-old and the Guineas is a possibility."

ing last of the eight runners. But the in-form trainer still managed a treble, courtesy of Bonnycliffe Court. The Puzzer and Za-lin to take his score to 12 winners in the past two weeks.

Doncaster runners and riders with form

Table listing race details for Doncaster, including race names, runners, jockeys, and trainers. Races include 2.00 Maiden Stakes, 2.30 Flat Stakes, and 3.00 Maiden Stakes.

Newbury (N.H.)

Table listing race details for Newbury, including race names, runners, jockeys, and trainers. Races include 2.10 Crown Stew, 2.40 Paddy's Return, and 3.00 Maiden Stakes.

Fakenham (N.H.)

Table listing race details for Fakenham, including race names, runners, jockeys, and trainers. Races include 2.20 Newbury, 2.50 Lucky Dollar, and 3.20 Maiden Stakes.

Mytton seems choice wager

THE Breeders' Cup may tempt the wagers today with some leading names - past and present - on show. David Nicholson can get off to a flying start by winning the first two races. Flat recruit Circus Star (2.10) will have been thoroughly schooled, and Mytton's Choice (2.40) could still be very well handicapped after a runaway victory at Chepstow.

Results

Table of race results for Doncaster, listing race names, winners, jockeys, and trainers. Races include 2.00 Maiden Stakes, 2.30 Flat Stakes, and 3.00 Maiden Stakes.

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Nottingham

Table listing race details for Nottingham, including race names, runners, jockeys, and trainers.

Newbury (N.H.)

Table listing race details for Newbury, including race names, runners, jockeys, and trainers.

Fakenham (N.H.)

Table listing race details for Fakenham, including race names, runners, jockeys, and trainers.

Vertical text on the left margin: 'TAT', 'Jobs at risk', 'Workers strike', 'More jobs', 'More more', 'Rotation pulled'.

Rugby Union

Robert Armstrong on a measure of rapprochement by the top clubs that should preserve the integrity of England's forthcoming internationals

Rowell gets his leading men back

ENGLAND will have all players at their disposal for the pre-Christmas international. But Epruc (English Professional Rugby Union Clubs), which represents clubs in Courage Leagues One and Two and last month persuaded players to boycott an England training session, said the players would not be released for RFU divisional games against touring sides and domestic opposition.

England players as pawns in its protracted dispute with the RFU was to some extent forced by the players' representatives, who have shown marked reluctance to become embroiled in English rugby's power politics. Epruc will rely instead on the threat of legal sanctions to pursue its goal of independent control of club competitions at home and on the Continent.

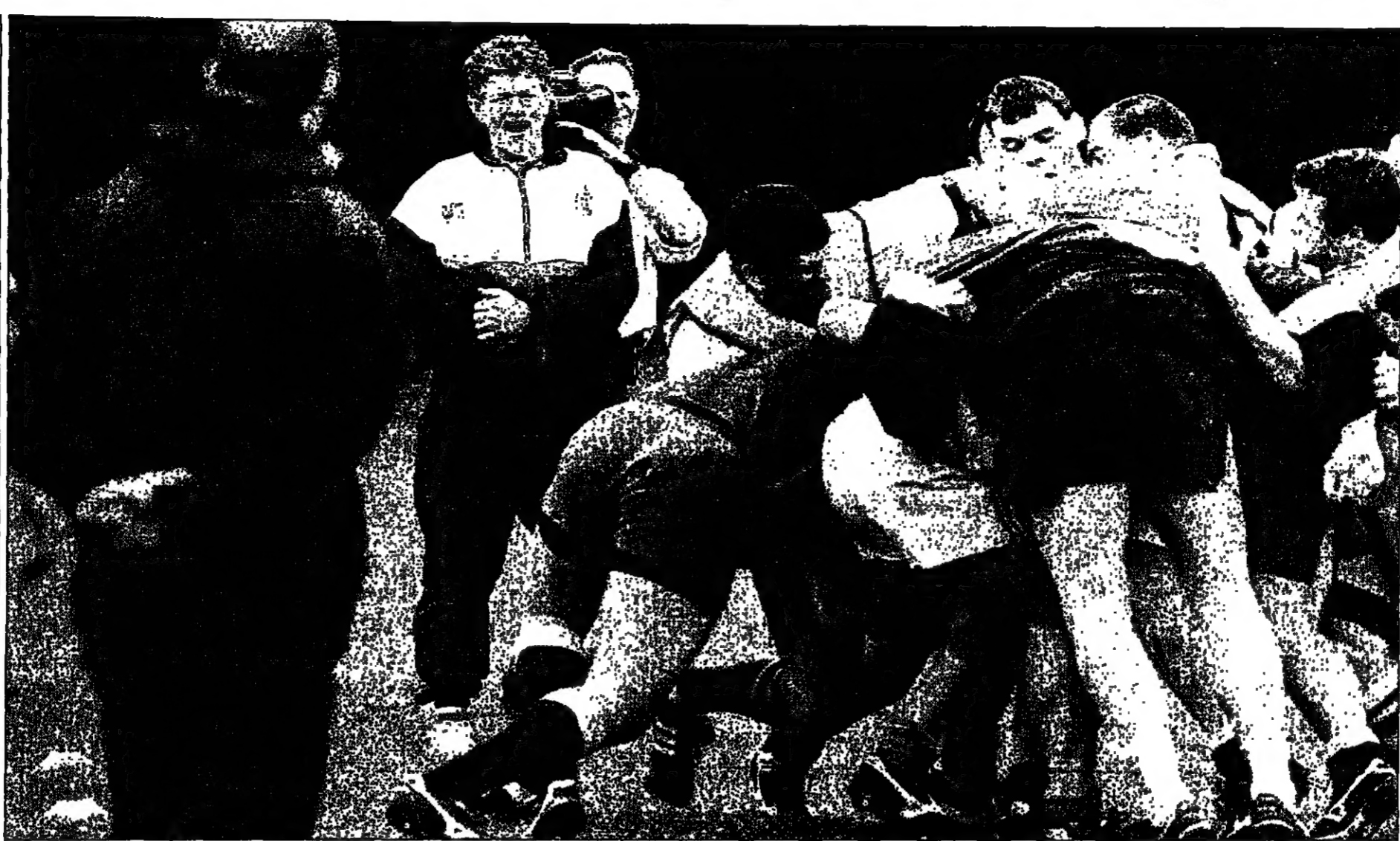
Wheeler added: "One person stopped the signing, and if the RFU's internal fighting ended we could be in agreement. I am talking about Cliff Brittle (chairman of the RFU executive committee). It is astonishing that one person can wield such power."

Epruc's tactics from outright aggression to a softly-softly approach indicates a lack of heavy artillery in the lower reaches of Leagues One and Two, where most clubs face cash-flow problems.

Bob Dwyer drops Underwood for Leicester's European excursion and would have done the same to Campese. Eddie Butler reports

The man putting new stripes on the Tigers

BOB DWYER should not be a good talker; he is too mournful to enjoy a matter as sprightly enough but the large spectacles and bushy moustache combine to give him the lugubrious air of someone resigned to live with a career in decline.



Overseer over here... Bob Dwyer, former coach of Australia, supervises training at Leicester, where he is trying to fathom a throw-back pack

Four years after winning the World Cup in England, Dwyer's Australia were dumped out of the 1995 tournament by England and a coach was relieved of his duties. Having taken his team into the South African experience as run-around favourites, Dwyer found himself on the wrong end of a Rob Andrew drop goal and the wrong side of the inquest.

Australians and New Zealanders have an inbuilt yearning to do their OE, their Overseas Experience. About 30 years later than most of his compatriots, Dwyer set off last autumn for Paris, to coach the utterly unpredictable but undeniably glamorous Racing Club de France.

like an England and Lions winger," he said. Last week he sat in his office at Oval Park, Osby, hunched in his long stockman's coat. The hearing in the temporary structure had not come on. On the wall was further evidence of substitutions for the spoken word. The magnet board was jam-packed with messages in coloured felt-pen: orange was for injury updates — out for two weeks was 2/52, three months was 3/12 — red for travel plans and brown for career structures. Would he talk? He began his first reply at

11.02am and finished it 37 minutes later. One question — something penetrating like "So, how's it going, Bob?" — led to no answer. He would not have picked David Campese for the current Wallabies tour of Europe — the great Campese whom Dwyer had protected throughout the wing's brilliant, turbulent career, which brought his 100th cap in Italy on Wednesday. "He played garbage all year and then he had a great Sydney Grand Final. It shouldn't have been enough. For example," and here he began writing down a

series of initials — JR, DS, BT, AM, a squiggle, then DC — "Joe Roff, Damon Smith, Ben Tune, Alistair Murdoch, somebody else; they were all ahead of Campese. But [and here he began to scratch out the initials] he's picked at centre, he's injured, he's not considered."

"So Campese's back. No reason why not. Britain brings out the best in him. Difficult to explain really; it's certainly nothing to do with the weather. By the way, I bet you it rains as much in Brisbane as it does here. All that stuff about you lot not being

able to play a handling game because of the rain is garbage. And have you ever seen it rain in Fiji? It throws it down and they never drop a pass. "And talking of passing — and I know you're going to ask me about Leicester being boring — did you know that we put together a passing movement against Leicester which could not have been better executed by anyone in the world?"

"My idea of a good player is someone who does his job at the right time so that the team benefits. That can be specific in flat-back play where the timing of the passes and the runs are all important in the face — literally in the faces — of the defence. But it can also relate to the broader picture, like the loose-head prop who has to keep the scrummers straight so that the cut-out pass wide on the left does exactly what it's meant to."

Rugby League

Salford winger switches codes

Paul Fitzpatrick FATA SINI, the Western Samoa and Salford Reds winger, has switched codes to play for Llanelli in what represents a double disappointment for the rugby league club.

Tennis

Jaded Sabatini calls it a day

GABRIELA SABATINI yesterday announced her retirement from world tennis, bringing to an end a career which earned her a \$2 million fortune in prize-money alone over the past 12 years, yet she departs with her talent largely unfulfilled.

Ice Hockey

British squad given a German accent

TWO Canadian-born players in a 31-strong Great Britain squad named by the coach Peter Woods for three crucial Olympic qualification Group A games to be played in the next eight weeks.

Sailing

Head winds hit Golding on the last lap to Rio

HEAD winds have slowed the progress of the leaders in the BT Global Challenge. Mike Golding's Group 4 made only seven miles towards Rio de Janeiro in two hours yesterday afternoon and still had 85 miles to go. At that rate she will not cross the finish line until after midday local time today.

Golf

Ames off to protect Allenby

AS ROBERT ALLENBY winged his painful way back to Australia yesterday having struck the silliest shot of the season, the news from the course, so far as he was concerned, was mixed. Allenby, currently third in the Volvo rankings, desperately wants to stay there to improve his chances of a US Masters invitation, and after the first round he would have liked the look of the leaders.

Cricket

Raza makes dazzling Test debut

Cricket Raza makes dazzling Test debut

Normal service resumes for relieved Becker

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BORIS BECKER yesterday moved a step nearer qualifying for a place in next month's ATP World Championship in Hanover, which he won last year, by producing his most convincing performance since injuring his right wrist at Wimbledon in June.



Ames... first-round leader

Ames off to protect Allenby

AS ROBERT ALLENBY winged his painful way back to Australia yesterday having struck the silliest shot of the season, the news from the course, so far as he was concerned, was mixed. Allenby, currently third in the Volvo rankings, desperately wants to stay there to improve his chances of a US Masters invitation, and after the first round he would have liked the look of the leaders.

Golf Volvo Masters News and Reports 0891 567 967

Cricket Raza makes dazzling Test debut

SportsGuardian



Masters mockery... Robert Allenby, whose season was cut short by injury, plays to the first-tee gallery as he hits his one and only shot at Valderrama PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREW REDINGTON

Allenby strikes it rich for charity in golf's great bonus-ball farce

David Davies reports from Valderrama

IT MAY not have been the shot that was heard around the world — more of a tiny tap with a three-wood — but the sound will surely reverberate round the halls of the headquarters of the PGA European Tour at Westworth, Surrey. Robert Allenby yesterday hit the most ridiculous shot ever struck in golf when, in order to claim he had "competed" in the Volvo Masters here, he hit a gleaming new ball some 40 yards down the first fairway and promptly abandoned his round.

This charade was deemed necessary under the rules of the European Tour, which told the Australian to make a 25,000-mile round trip from Melbourne if he wanted to claim the bonus money that goes with this season-ending tournament. Allenby is unfit to play, still in severe pain after breaking his sternum in a car crash. "It feels," he said, "as if someone has planted an axe in my chest." But rules are rules. The bonus money was important to Allenby, not because he is short of the odd £73,000 — indeed he immediately announced that the money would be given to two charities, the Challenge Cancer Support Network and the Teenage Cancer Trust — but because he needs to finish as high as possible in the Volvo rankings in order to earn an invitation to the US Masters; he currently lies third. So, when he realised that the Tour was serious, he got out of his sick-bed, popped a few pain-killers and flew back. "I was dreading any turbulence,"

he said, "and anyone driving me in a car has to be very careful not to brake sharply." He said the doctors did not know how long his recovery would take, but he remains optimistic. "The week after I'm fully fit," he said, "I'll be back in a tournament. And I'm going to come back bigger and better than ever. I came close to death and that sets your mind racing. Life's too short not to give it your absolute best."

Tournament report, page 15

Coming clean about sport's sordid secret



Vincent Hanna

IT TOOK courage for Lorraine Merson and Sheryl Gascoigne to speak out about the violence done to them. But no one should believe that they are isolated cases. It is a sordid secret in competitive sport that immature men do stupid and criminal things. Create a world where violence is part of the culture, and the weak are slaves. Four a few drinks. Make sure that by being "manly" you objectify and deride women, or as Mr Merson put it: "All you've ever been to me is a pathetic little insect, crawling around my feet and getting in my way." Have a few more drinks. Beating up the wife is easy then.

Many have escaped detection because of the bond of silence that binds battered wives to the embarrassed manager. Things only get awkward when the team is threatened. Take Gascoigne's case. He assaulted Sheryl on October 13. Three days later he stoned by kicking Winston Bogarde of Ajax and was sent off. We had the usual tear-streaked apology about being a disgrace. Then he added: "I think I took the domestic problem into the match with me."

Notice his priorities: the public concern was about the face of football — he could be punished for that — not messing up Sheryl's face. No doubt he is sorry for hitting Sheryl but the cost of hitting a footballer always will be higher. In America, in the past two years, the secret is out. There have been a number of cases of domestic violence by sports stars, notably O J Simpson and Warren Moon. They have spawned some serious research which we are only beginning to think about. Todd Crosset, from Dartmouth College, directed a study in 30 United States universities and found that student athletes were responsible for a significantly high proportion of assaults on women. "Part of their world is not to be a woman," writes Crosset, "women are degraded. No one wants to be a sissy, women are to be despised." One high-school coach in Los Angeles

made the point by painting a vagina on the teaching dummies. Merrill Melnick, of New York University, argues that "aggression on the field, sexist language in the locker room, an inordinate need to prove one's masculinity, can predispose towards off-the-field hostility."

But wait, I hear you say, wife beaters are disturbed immature creatures, not like you and me. "That's not true," says Professor Rebecca Dobash, Professor of Social Research at the University of Manchester and an authority on domestic violence. "They are normal people who take their feelings to extremes. They do it because in large measure the violence reinforces their need to control, and there is usually little or no cost to them."

Athletes respect control. Every player wants it. You have heard boxers, fast bowlers, batsmen say: "I owned him; he was all mine." Psychologists point out that men who seek to dominate opponents to raise their self-esteem often have a problem with domestic violence. But it may take a tragedy to highlight it. The effect of the O J Simpson case in the US was traumatic, partly because the details were horrific but mainly because O J was a true national hero. Everybody wanted to be like O J. He could not be dismissed as a freak. As many dismiss Paul Gascoigne. So in the US they have begun to talk about it. Bonnie Flynn runs a shelter in Fort Lauderdale for abused women. Sportswomen go there openly to discuss family violence as a part of their lives. Miami Dolphins players have been telling how their mothers were abused and how they in turn assault women. It has made a big impact.

Sky's Premiership deal 'under scrutiny'

Andrew Culf on European plans to monitor Murdoch's exclusive television contract

BSKYB's record-breaking £670 million Premiership television deal was thrown into doubt last night after Europe's competition

authorities said the agreement was under scrutiny. Karal van Miert, the European competition commissioner, had expressed concerns about the dominant

market position achieved by some broadcasters, including Rupert Murdoch's satellite station. The commissioner, who has powers to revise contracts and fine broadcasters if he finds that European competition laws have been broken, is currently investigating a Dutch sports channel.

Van Miert said last night that the BSKyB contract with the Premiership was being investigated as part of a "general monitoring exercise related to the overall phenomenon of exclusive TV rights on sports events". Opposition from the European authorities could pose a serious threat to Murdoch's

television ambitions. Last week he outlined plans to use sport as a "battering ram" for the expansion of his global pay-TV network. Van Miert angrily denied a report on BBC Radio 5 Live's Inside Edge programme that he was launching a formal investigation against BSKyB. But he said the deal would be carefully scrutinised. "What should not happen is that those acquiring the rights will be in such a dominant position that they are going to impose the rules," he told the programme.

The monitoring exercise will run alongside a separate investigation being mounted by the Office of Fair Trading into the four-year deal, signed in June, which also involves the BBC. BSKyB outbid a Carlton/Mirror Group consortium and the MAI media group to secure live Premiership coverage, while the BBC retained highlights for Match of the Day. The Premiership clubs' chairman took only two hours to decide to award the contract to BSKyB.

The OFT has already referred the present five-year deal, which expires in June, to the Restrictive Practices Court. Live football is vital to the future of BSKyB, which is largely dependent on income from its five million-plus subscribers. With the launch of 200 digital satellite channels expected next year, BSKyB is planning to screen all Premiership matches on a pay-per-view basis.

Van Miert said: "We are worried; we have a lot of questions which we need to sort out as rapidly as possible. We must make sure the

maximum number of people are allowed to see these sport events." He added: "We have to question for how long companies are allowed to own these rights. If there are only a very few big companies left having the financial power and having the strength to buy all the broadcasting rights, then something is wrong. They can acquire a dominant position."

Rick Parry, the chief executive of the FA Premier League, rejected the BBC's report of a formal investigation as a "non-story". He said: "The Premier League has been involved in a positive, on-going dialogue with the EC in relation to its 1992 TV contract with BSKyB and the EC have indicated they have no major outstanding problems with that agreement."

He added that details of the new deal had been sent to the EC in July. "We will be discussing these with the Commission and are confident that the EC will respond positively. It is perfectly normal they should be considered alongside other deals which have recently been put together in Europe."

Parry said the League's agreements — with BSKyB, BBC TV, Radio 5 Live and IRN — were regarded as a model for many other sports. BSKyB's contract received the backing last night of the conservative former cabinet minister David Mellor. He told Radio 5 Live that football needed the extra revenue from satellite television. He accused critics of the deal of being "slushy and emotional", adding: "You cannot serve up football as if it is on the NHS."

Guardian Crossword No 20,793

Set by Custos

23 Broken-down remains seen in journey's round India's capital (5)

24 Callow trainee that is attached to the castle (6)

25 Delighted about Josephine getting frozen (8)

26 Fellow with a crib is a stupid person (6)

27 Settles in part of the theatre (8)

Down

1 Winkle given by parliamentarian in government (6)

2 Mum, getting order, gave way (6)

3 Reserve and pay for support for reader (9)

4 Thingummy — was he this man, possibly? (5-3-4)

6 A French fellow to deprive of fortitude (5)

7 Turbulent, causing endless commotion about lawsuit mostly (8)

8 Talking through the nose, when settled in New York (8)

11 Thriving business causing anxiety after being sold (5,7)

15 Some deliver worthless plant (9)

16 Type of central heating having remarkably safe grid (3-3)

17 Outwary covers nasty bones of ignoble birth (4-4)

19 What's taken from the staff is callously budgetary (8)

12 Brings ashore youngsters, about last of platoon (6)

13 Bird to make love sentimentally and caress fondly (9)

14 Countrywide search for association of riders (8,4)

18 Crooked lad can advise where great treasure is stored (8,4)

21 A film ends cryptically, making point perhaps? (9)

Across

1 Advanced to deliver an ornamental receptacle (4-4)

5 Cake provided by miss at home (6)

9 Herb for seasoning brings damage to gold colour in preserve (8)

10 Garments to scoff at on board ship (6)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,792

20 Indirect efforts made by adjutants about ending of war-games (6)

22 Unfreeze and gamble when touring the orient (2-3)

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PURCHASED TERROR

INDIAN

CASTLE

JOSEPHINE

STUPID

THEATRE

WINKLE

MUM

RESERVE

THINGUMMY

FRENCH

TURBULENT

TALKING

THRIVING

SOME

HEATING

OUTWARY

BRINGS

BIRD

SEARCH

CROOKED

FILM

ADVANCED

CAKE

HERB

GARMENTS

Robson sets off scramble for out-of-favour Barmby

Ian Ross

NICK BARMBY'S departure from Middlesbrough is now likely to happen sooner rather than later. Only 14 months after his £5.25 million move from Tottenham,

the England striker is seemingly surplus to requirements at the Riverside Stadium. He was dropped for the League Cup win over Huddersfield in midweek, and although Middlesbrough's manager Bryan Robson has put a £7 million price on the 22-year-old, there will be no shortage of interest. Everton, Blackburn and Leeds are keen on signing him and all could fund a meaningful bid. Four weeks ago Blackburn offered £5 million and their manager Ray Harford's inter-

est remains very much alive, but he will be unable to reopen negotiations until his own future has been decided; after the League Cup defeat by Stockport on Tuesday, his position is precarious to say the least.

Leeds's new manager George Graham is keen to rebuild and has an estimated £10 million at his disposal. If he were to offer Lee Sharpe, a former team-mate of Robson's at Manchester United, in part exchange it is conceivable that Barmby could be a Leeds player before tomorrow's game at Arsenal.

Everton's manager Joe Royle has indicated that he would like to have Barmby as a partner for Duncan Ferguson. More soccer, page 14

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